Problem Solving in Teams and Groups

CAMERON W. PIERCY, PH.D.
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### Back Matter
This textbook covers content relevant to COMS342 Problem Solving in Teams and Groups at the University of Kansas. Content in this textbook is adapted from The Open University, OpenStax, The Noba Project, and Wikipedia. Each chapter presents the source in the top header and each chapter has its own version of the Creative Commons (CC) license, noted at the bottom of the chapter.

This book (commonly called an Open Educational Resource, OER) was made possible through a generous grant through the KU Libraries. Special thanks to Karna Younger, Josh Bollick, and William Hoffman for helping with this project.

This textbook is designed with several purposes:

1. The primary purpose is to save students money.
2. Additionally this book is designed to cater the class reading content to the students’ needs.
3. Finally this book was created as a text that can easily change based on the needs of the course.

Please submit any revisions via comments on any chapter or email them directly to Dr. Cameron Piercy (cpiery@ku.edu).

Sincerely,

Cameron W. Piercy, Ph.D.

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Syllabus and Schedule

COMS342
Problem Solving in Teams and Groups (Lecture)
Spring 2020
M 11:00 – 12:15 PM, Mallot Hall 2001
Discussion Sections
W 11:00 – 12:15 PM, Smith (SMI) 206
W 11:00 – 12:15 PM, Smith (SMI) 108
W 3:00 – 4:15 PM, Bailey (BA) 105
W 3:00 – 4:15 PM, Bailey (BA) 103

Instructors and Student Hours:
Cameron W. Piercy, Ph.D cpiercy@ku.edu
William Hoffman, M.A wb.hoffman@ku.edu
Anthony Guy, M.A aguy@ku.edu
**Email is the best/fastest way to contact us.

Required Materials:

Course Policies

• The Kansas Board of Regents sets expectations for course work-load. A full-time student (taking between 12 and 18 hours) should expect to spend between 36-48 hours in and out of the classroom. **That means this course will take ~9 hours per week.** Some weeks will be busier than others.
• Because this class is focused on team-based activities, students will be assessed: (1) individually, (2) as a team, and (3) by their peers. Each form of assessment parallels standard business and academic practice. **Your peers’ perceptions matter.**
• **It is not possible to practice problem solving in teams and groups without being in a team or group.** The projects assigned for this class are not meant to be completed by an individual, they require a team. When you experience difficulty or friction in your group/team, your instructor's role is to listen and provide guidance. It is the responsibility of group members to resolve conflicts and problems in order to complete the various projects throughout the semester. Instructors only act as a consultant in these matters.
• Periodically, you will be given class time to meet with your group and discuss your projects; however, **the demands of the assignments also require you to meet with your group outside of class.**
• **You can be “fired” from your group or team** if you are not adequately participating. Firing must be a unanimous and well-documented decision executed by all fellow group members. **If you are fired you are not likely to pass the course.**

Course Goals:

1. The purpose of this course is to overview a variety of issues in small group communication. This course will examine small groups with an emphasis on how messages, talk, symbols, and discourse contribute to effective small groups. By the end of the semester you should be able to answer questions such as:
   1. What is a small group?
   2. When should individuals or groups be used to make decisions?
   3. How do groups form and develop? What kinds of stages do groups go through?
What kinds of strategies promote effective group decision making?
How do issues of power and social influence affect group life?
What counts as effective group leadership?
How can conflict within small groups be managed constructively?

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2. **Learning objectives**: This course will focus on competent communication in small groups. To be a competent group communicator, you should: (a) develop an understanding of what constitutes competent communication within the small group context, and (b) be able to apply this in groups and teams. Thus, you should be able to:
   1. Execute a complex team project including idea development, project coordination, and creation of a lasting outcome.
   2. Develop social structures (often through messages) to manage common group issues and tensions effectively
   3. Identify and develop skills of leading and participating within small groups
   4. Implement appropriate conflict management techniques
   5. Construct messages to avoid common biases in groups and teams
   6. Generate constructive feedback for supervisors, peers, and subordinates
   7. Facilitate effective group discussions

3. This course is also considered an upper-level course. One of the primary goals is to sharpen your written expression of important ideas and concepts and build your capacity for making strong critical arguments backed by evidence.

4. **We will respect one another in this course.** You will be asked to leave if you are disrespectful to other students or the instructor.

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**Other Policies**

- **Technology: use it if it is helpful.** Only use technology for course-related tasks. Please be open about technology with your peers (e.g., “Can you put your phone down and focus on this conversation?”) The instructors reserve the right to inquire what you are doing on your devices, and to ask you to put away phones, tablets, or laptops at any time.
- **Attendance:** Attendance will be taken each class period. Work missed without appropriate excuse documentation (in advance, if available) cannot be made up. Please communicate about absences with your discussion instructor, instructor, and group/team.
- **Deadlines:** All work is due in class or on Blackboard on the designated due date. All written work (i.e., proposal, report, and self-reflection) must be uploaded to Blackboard. **Instructors do not accept late work. Instructors will not accept e-mailed assignments. No make-up work is allowed without written instructor permission.**
- **Class format:** In general, our class will cover content on the first class day (Monday) and practice application on the second class day (Wednesday). Lectures will not be taken directly from the textbook. Each student is responsible for content from the textbook, lectures, and discussion. All three sources will be used to create exams.
- **Student accessibility and success.** Any student needing accommodations for the course should let the instructor know. Students who need assistance obtaining accommodations may contact Student Access Services at
• Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct is a serious offense. Academic misconduct is described in Article II, Section 6 of the [University Senate Rules and Regulations](https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR). You are responsible for knowing the standards of academic conduct. The document is available here: [policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR](https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR)

• **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious offense. Using the words and ideas of others is borrowing something from those individuals. It is always necessary to identify the original source of supporting information. **You must cite the source of any material, quoted or paraphrased, in both written work and oral presentations.**

Sometimes writers are uncertain about what to cite. Here are some firm guidelines:

- If you write word for word what appears in another source, put quotation marks around it and cite the source (author, year, page number).
- If you borrow and summarize ideas, arguments, data, or other information from another source, cite the source even if you put the material in your own words (author, year).
- Agreeing with the material does not make it your own; if it originated with someone else, give that person credit according to a formally recognized style. Helpful websites:
  - [http://writing.ku.edu](http://writing.ku.edu)
  - [https://owl.purdue.edu/](https://owl.purdue.edu/)

**Grading Philosophy:**

1. **Grades are earned.** Your grade will be a reflection of what you demonstrated you have learned, not a reflection of how hard you have worked or what you report you have learned after you have received your grade.

2. **24/7 rule:** If you do not understand why you have received the grade you have, please schedule a consultation with your instructor. Please wait **24 hours** after receiving an assignment grade to contact the instructor to discuss or appeal it. Further, you have **one week** from the date the assignment was returned in class to meet with the instructor. When bringing assignments in for discussion, please have thoughtful arguments including being able to point to specifics in the assignment and in your work. The book, lecture slides, and outside sources are all welcome in this conversation.

3. **Extra credit.** There are two ways to earn extra credit in COMS342: 1) participate in the Communication Research Pool (NAC-000-019 in Blackboard) (up to 2%) and/or 2) Write a 1-page recommendation of what ought to be deleted, added, or modified in any chapter of the OER (up to 1%). Submit all chapter revision papers to [cpiercy@ku.edu](mailto:cpiercy@ku.edu)

4. **Incompletes are not given in COMS 342.**

**Grade categories:**

- **Exams (25%, 250 points):** This class will include two (2) exams. The exams will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, true–false questions, and/or open-ended questions. Each exam will be administered during the time detailed in the schedule below. No make-up tests will be allowed without written permission from the lead instructor.

- **Reading–Checks or Participation (10%, 100 points):** The class will include 12 reading pop-quizzes which are closed book and cover the reading. Some days the quiz will be replaced by a participation check. Only 10 of the quizzes will count, the lowest scores will be dropped. The quiz dates will NOT be listed on the schedule and will occur regularly in the lecture section (i.e., Mon. at 11:00). These quizzes are to encourage reading. **Students who do not wish to complete the quiz can instead submit hand–written notes on the readings for the day.**
DO GOOD Project (32.5% papers and presentations; 15% peer evaluations and performance appraisals; 7.5% for self-reflection)

In teams you will be asked to propose your best idea for doing good in the Lawrence/KU community. This assignment is iterative, that means we will engage in steps and revise content throughout the semester. The assignment is broken down into small chunks to help you set and attain your goals. Each group is encouraged to imagine the most/best good they can do. The major steps of the project are as follows:

1. **Where and why? (50 points for proposal, 25 for presentation; 25 points for peer evaluation)** This portion of the Do Good assignment uses the smallest group unit (three members) to propose ideas for the semester-long project. The class will vote on your ideas and the best three or four will be pursued by the class.

2. **When and how? (70 points for paper; 25 points for peer evaluation)** Teams will be reconfigured according to the scope of the projects selected by the class. Sub-teams of no more than six will create documents outlining when and how the team will Do Good. This portion of the assignment is used to establish contact with the partnering organization, propose a reasonable timeline, and specify roles and rules for doing good this semester. After this assignment you should complete your first peer evaluation.

3. **Give and Get Feedback. (30 points for feedback from partner organization; 50 points for performance appraisal; 75 points for self-reflection)** Doing good is hard. As you know by this point in the class, it’s easy to commit to ideas that are less than ideal. The purpose of this assignment is three-fold: 1) open communication channels with your sponsoring organization and get some feedback 2) provide one teammate with personalized feedback through a thorough performance evaluation, and 3) write a self-reflection on your experience working in a team to Do Good.

4. **Final Report (100 points for paper; 50 points for presentation; 50 points for peer evaluation)** You’ve done it! Now compile a creative formal report on your Do Good experience. This report should include information about both process and product. Students will write a traditional report, add an infographic or other cool handout, present to the class, and students will be asked to submit a final peer evaluation.

**Participation (10%, 100 points) ***Some points in this category may not be allocated ***

Participation points are tied directly to work completed in discussion sections of the course. Each section instructor will provide details regarding allocation of participation points.

Grade Points Breakdown (~1000 points, points subject to change based on discussion section and course needs)
· Two Exams 25% (individual: 125 points each)

· Do Good Project 32.5% (team:)

· Self-reflection 7.5% (individual: 75 points)

· Peer evaluations and performance appraisals 15% (individual: 150 points: 100 points across 3 peer evaluations, 50 points for performance appraisals)

· Reading Checks or Participation 10% (individual: 11 reading-check quizzes @ 10 points, drop the lowest score)

· Participation 10% (team and individual: 100 points: allocated by discussion instructor)

Research Extra Credit, up to 3% (30 points)

Final Grades:

- A 89.5 – 100%
- B 79.5 – 89.5%
- C 69.5 – 79.5%
- D 59.5 – 69.5%
- F < 60%

**Final point total may vary by section and allocated points/assignments.

COMS 342 CLASS SCHEDULE

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. You are responsible for staying up-to-date on the course schedule posted on Blackboard. All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Papers should be submitted on Blackboard prior to class. Papers submitted in class are due at the start of class on the due date. Dates shown are the deadline day. Quizzes will occur during class.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Read Before Class</th>
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<td>Mon., Jan. 20</td>
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<td><strong>MLK Day: No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Wed., Jan. 22</td>
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<td>Mindset, Small Groups, and Communication</td>
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<td>Wed., Jan. 29</td>
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<td>Defining Teams and Groups</td>
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<td>Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 5</td>
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<td>Social Comparison [cooperation v competition debate]</td>
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<td>The Psychology of Groups</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 12</td>
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<td>Shared Information Bias [activity]</td>
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<td>Mon., Feb. 17</td>
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<td>Teams as Systems</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 19</td>
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<td>Create writing guide</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Feb. 24</td>
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<td>Presenting as a team</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 26</td>
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<td>Inattentional Bias, Exam Review</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Mar. 4</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Present Where and Why? &amp; Peer evaluation #1</strong></td>
<td>Due on BB</td>
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<td>Mon., Mar. 9</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break: No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Wed., Mar. 11</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break: No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Mon., Mar. 16</td>
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<td>Group Meetings</td>
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<td>Wed., Mar. 18</td>
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<td>Gantt Charts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Mar. 23</td>
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<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td>Wed., Mar. 25</td>
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<td><strong>Due: When and How? &amp; Peer Evaluation #2</strong></td>
<td>Ch. 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Create Performance Review]</td>
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<td>Power: BRING $3 to Class [Activity]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., April 1</td>
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<td>Getting feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., April 6</td>
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<td>Judgment and Decision-Making</td>
<td>Ch. 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., April 8</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Due: Feedback &amp; Signed Performance Evals.</strong></td>
<td>Due on BB</td>
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<th>Week Thirteen</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., April 13</td>
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<td>Structuration and Symbolic Convergence</td>
<td>Ch. 16</td>
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<td>Wed., April 15</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Concept Driven Self-Reflection/ Do Good Workday</strong></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon., April 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., April 22</td>
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<td>Conformity and obedience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., April 27</td>
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<td>Culture and groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., April 29</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Completed final report</strong></td>
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<th>Week Sixteen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., May 4</td>
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<td>Conflict and Negotiation</td>
<td>Ch. 21</td>
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*Subject to change based on the needs of the class and the project.

Important: University policy does not allow for students to complete final exam/presentations early (see http://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR). Make travel arrangements which allow you to be in class.
SECTION II
GROUPS & TEAMS OVERVIEW

This section introduces the basics for groups and teams.
1. Defining Teams and Groups

The content included in this chapter is adapted from two Open University chapters: *Working in Groups and Teams* and *Groups and Teamwork*

What is a group?

Our tendency to form groups is a pervasive aspect of organizational life. In addition to formal groups, committees, and teams, there are informal groups, cliques, and factions.

**Formal groups** are used to organize and distribute work, pool information, devise plans, coordinate activities, increase commitment, negotiate, resolve conflicts and conduct inquests. Group work allows the pooling of people's individual skills and knowledge, and helps compensate for individual deficiencies. Estimates suggest most managers spend 50 percent of their working day in one sort of group or another, and for top management of large organizations this can rise to 80 percent. Thus, formal groups are clearly an integral part of the functioning of an organization.

No less important are informal groups. These are usually structured more around the social needs of people than around the performance of tasks. **Informal groups** usually serve to satisfy needs of affiliation, and act as a forum for exploring self-concept as a means of gaining support, and so on. However, these informal groups may also have an important effect on formal work tasks, for example by exerting subtle pressures on group members to conform to a particular work rate, or as 'places' where news, gossip, etc., is exchanged.

What is a team?

You probably described a team as a group of some kind. However, a team is more than just a group. When you think of all the groups that you belong to, you will probably find that very few of them are really teams. Some of them will be family or friendship groups that are formed to meet a wide range of needs such as affection, security, support, esteem, belonging, or identity. Some may be committees whose members represent different interest groups and who meet to discuss their differing perspectives on issues of interest.

In this reading the term ‘work group’ (or ‘group’) is often used interchangeably with the word ‘team,’ although a **team** may be thought of as a particularly cohesive and purposeful type of work group. We can distinguish work groups or teams from more casual groupings of people by using the following set of criteria (Adair, 1983). A collection of people can be defined as a work group or team if it shows most, if not all, of the following characteristics:

**Activity 1**

Write your own definition of a 'team' (in 20 words or less).

Provide an example of a team working toward an achievable goals
• **A definable membership:** a collection of three or more people identifiable by name or type;
• **A group consciousness or identity:** the members think of themselves as a group;
• **A sense of shared purpose:** the members share some common task or goals or interests;
• **Interdependence:** the members need the help of one another to accomplish the purpose for which they joined the group;
• **Interaction:** the members communicate with one another, influence one another, react to one another;
• **Sustainability:** the team members periodically review the team's effectiveness;
• **An ability to act together.**

Usually, the tasks and goals set by teams cannot be achieved by individuals working alone because of constraints on time and resources, and because few individuals possess all the relevant competences and expertise. Sports teams or orchestras clearly fit these criteria.

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List some examples of **teams** of which you are a member – both inside and outside work – in your learning file.

Now list some **groups**. What strikes you as the main differences?

Your team examples probably highlight specific jobs or projects in your workplace, or personal interests and hobbies outside work. Teamwork is usually connected with project work and this is a feature of much work. Teamwork is particularly useful when you have to address risky, uncertain, or unfamiliar problems where there is a lot of choice and discretion surrounding the decision to be made. In the area of voluntary and unpaid work, where pay is not an incentive, teamwork can help to motivate support and commitment because it can offer the opportunities to interact socially and learn from others. Furthermore, people are more willing to support and defend work they helped create (Stanton, 1992).

By contrast, many groups are much less explicitly focused on an external task. In some instances, the growth and development of the group itself is its primary purpose; process is more important than outcome. Many groups are reasonably fluid and less formally structured than teams. In the case of work groups, an agreed and defined outcome is often regarded as a sufficient basis for effective cooperation and the development of adequate relationships.

Importantly, groups and teams are not distinct entities. Both can be pertinent in personal development as well as organizational development and managing change. In such circumstances, when is it appropriate to embark on teambuilding rather than relying on ordinary group or solo working?

**In general, the greater the task uncertainty the more important teamwork is**, especially if it is necessary to represent the differing perspectives of concerned parties. In such situations, the facts themselves do not always point to an obvious policy or strategy for innovation, support, and development: decisions are partially based on the opinions and the personal visions of those involved.

There are risks associated with working in teams as well. Under some conditions, teams may produce more conventional, rather than more innovative, responses to problems. The reason for this is that team decisions may regress towards the average, with group pressures to conform cancelling out more innovative decision options (Makin, Cooper, & Cox, 1989). It depends on how innovative the team is, in terms of its membership, its norms, and its values.

Teamwork may also be inappropriate when you want a fast decision. Team decision making is usually slower than individual decision making because of the need for communication and consensus about the decision taken. Despite the business successes of Japanese companies, it is now recognized that promoting a collective organizational identity and
responsibility for decisions can sometimes slow down operations significantly, in ways that are not always compensated for by better decision making.

Is a team or group really needed?

There may be times when group working – or simply working alone – is more appropriate and more effective. For example, decision-making in groups and teams is usually slower than individual decision-making because of the need for communication and consensus. In addition, groups and teams may produce conventional rather than innovative responses to problems, because decisions may regress towards the average, with the more innovative decision options being rejected (Makin et al., 1989).

In general, the greater the ‘task uncertainty’, that is to say the less obvious and more complex the task to be addressed, the more important it will be to work in a group or team rather than individually. This is because there will be a greater need for different skills and perspectives, especially if it is necessary to represent the different perspectives of the different stakeholders involved.

Table 2 lists some occasions when it will be appropriate to work in teams, in groups or alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When to work alone or in groups</th>
<th>When to build teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For simple tasks or problems</td>
<td>For highly-complex tasks or problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When cooperation is sufficient</td>
<td>When decisions by consensus are essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When minimum discretion is required</td>
<td>When there is a high level of choice and uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When fast decisions are needed</td>
<td>When high commitment is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When few competences are required</td>
<td>When a broad range of competences and different skills are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When members’ interests are different or in conflict</td>
<td>When members’ objectives can be brought together towards a common purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an organization credits individuals for operational outputs</td>
<td>When an organization rewards team results for strategy and vision building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When innovative responses are sought</td>
<td>When balanced views are sought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of teams

Different organizations or organizational settings lead to different types of team. The type of team affects how that team is managed, what the communication needs of the team are and, where appropriate, what aspects of the project the project manager needs to emphasize. A work group or team may be permanent, forming part of the organization's structure, such as a top management team, or temporary, such as a task force assembled to see through a particular project. Members may work as a group continuously or meet only intermittently. The more direct contact and communication team members have with each other, the more likely they are to function well as a team. Thus, getting a group to function well is a valuable management aim.

The following section defines common types of team. Many teams may not fall clearly into one type, but may combine elements of different types. Many organizations have traditionally been managed through a hierarchical structure. This general structure is illustrated in Figure 1, and consists of:

- staff performing similar tasks – grouped together reporting to a single supervisor;
• **junior managers** – responsible for a number of supervisors and their groups;

• **groups of junior managers** – reporting to departmental heads;

• **departmental heads** – reporting to senior managers, who are responsible for wide-ranging functions such as manufacturing, finance, human resources and marketing;

• **senior managers** – reporting to the managing director, who may then report to the Board.

The number of levels clearly depends upon the size and to some extent on the type of the organization. Typically, the 'span of control' (the number of people each manager or supervisor is directly responsible for) averages about five people, but this can vary widely. **As a general rule it is bad practice for any single manager to supervise more than 7-10 people.**

![Figure 1 The traditional hierarchical structure. Note: The highlighted area shows one supervisor's span of control: the people who work for that supervisor](image)

While the hierarchy is designed to provide a stable 'backbone' to the organization, projects are primarily concerned with change, and so tend to be organized quite differently. Their structure needs to be more fluid than that of conventional management structures. There are four commonly used types of project team: the functional team, the project (single) team, the matrix team and the contract team.

**Activity 3**

*Why is it problematic for a manager to supervise too many people? How does this relate to groups, is there an ideal group size or configuration?*
THE FUNCTIONAL TEAM

The hierarchical structure described above divides groups of people along largely functional lines: people working together carry out the same or similar functions. A functional team is a team in which work is carried out within such a functionally organized group. This can be project work. In organizations in which the functional divisions are relatively rigid, project work can be handed from one functional team to another in order to complete the work. For example, work on a new product can pass from marketing, which has the idea, to research and development, which sees whether it is technically feasible, thence to design and finally manufacturing. This is sometimes known as ‘baton passing’ – or, less flatteringly, as ‘throwing it over the wall’!

The project (single) team

The project, or single, team consists of a group of people who come together as a distinct organizational unit in order to work on a project or projects. The team is often led by a project manager, though self-managing and self-organizing arrangements are also found. Quite often, a team that has been successful on one project will stay together to work on subsequent projects. This is particularly common where an organization engages repeatedly in projects of a broadly similar nature – for example developing software, or in construction. Perhaps the most important issue in this instance is to develop the collective capability of the team, since this is the currency for continued success. People issues are often crucial in achieving this.

The closeness of the dedicated project team normally reduces communication problems within the team. However, care should be taken to ensure that communications with other stakeholders (senior management, line managers and other members of staff in the departments affected, and so on) are not neglected, as it is easy for ‘us and them’ distinctions to develop.

The matrix team

In a matrix team, staff report to different managers for different aspects of their work. Matrix structures are often, but not exclusively, found in projects. Matrix structures are more common in large and multi-national organizations. In this structure, staff are responsible to the project manager for their work on the project while their functional line manager may be responsible for other aspects of their work such as appraisal, training, and career development, and ‘routine’ tasks. This matrix project structure is represented in Figure 2. Notice how the traditional hierarchy is cross-cut by the ‘automated widget manufacturing configuration.’
In this form of organization, staff from various functional areas (such as design, software development, manufacturing or marketing) are loaned or seconded to work on a particular project. Such staff may work full or part time on the project. The project manager thus has a recognizable team and is responsible for controlling and monitoring its work on the project.

However, many of the project staff will still have other duties to perform in their normal functional departments. The functional line managers they report to will retain responsibility for this work and for the professional standards of their work on the project, as well as for their training and career development. It is important to overcome the problems staff might have with the dual reporting lines (the ‘two-boss’ problem). This requires building good interpersonal relationships with the team members and regular, effective communication.

The contract team

The contract team is brought in from outside in order to do the project work. Here, the responsibility to deliver the project rests very firmly with the project manager. The client will find such a team harder to control directly. On the other hand, it is the client who will judge the success of the project, so the project manager has to keep an eye constantly on the physical outcomes of the project. A variant of this is the so-called ‘outsourced supply team’, which simply means that the team is physically situated remotely from the project manager, who then encounters the additional problem of ‘managing at a distance’.

Mixed structures

Teams often have mixed structures:

- Some members may be employed to work full time on the project and be fully responsible to the project manager. Project managers themselves are usually employed full time.
- Others may work part time, and be responsible to the project manager only during their time on the project. For example, internal staff may well work on several projects at the same time. Alternatively, an external consultant
working on a given project may also be involved in a wider portfolio of activities.

- Some may be part of a matrix arrangement, whereby their work on the project is overseen by the project manager and they report to their line manager for other matters. Project administrators often function in this way, serving the project for its duration, but having a career path within a wider administrative service.
- Still others may be part of a functional hierarchy, undertaking work on the project under their line manager’s supervision by negotiation with their project manager. For instance, someone who works in an organization’s legal department may provide the project team with access to legal advice when needed.

In relatively small projects the last two arrangements are a very common way of accessing specialist services that will only be needed from time to time.

| Activity 4 |
| What are some of the relative benefits and drawbacks to some of these team configurations? |
| Which one is best for a large and complex problem? Which is normal for a straightforward task? |

Modern teams

In addition to the traditional types of teams or groups outlined above, recent years have seen the growth of interest in three other important types of team: ‘self-managed teams’, ‘self-organizing teams’, and ‘dispersed virtual teams.’

A typical self-managed team may be permanent or temporary. It operates in an informal and non-hierarchical manner, and has considerable responsibility for the way it carries out its tasks. It is often found in organizations that are developing total quality management and quality assurance approaches. The Industrial Society Survey observed that: “Better customer service, more motivated staff, and better quality of output are the three top motives for moving to [self-managed teams], managers report.”

In contrast, organizations that deliberately encourage the formation of self-organizing teams are comparatively rare. Teams of this type can be found in highly flexible, innovative organizations that thrive on creativity and informality. These are modern organizations that recognize the importance of learning and adaptability in ensuring their success and continued survival. However, self-organizing teams exist, unrecognized, in many organizations. For instance, in traditional, bureaucratic organizations, people who need to circumvent the red tape may get together in order to make something happen and, in so doing, spontaneously create a self-organizing team. The team will work together, operating outside the formal structures, until its task is done and then it will disband.

Table 2 shows some typical features of self-managed and self-organizing teams.

| Table 2: Comparing Self-managed and Self-Organizing Teams |

Defining Teams and Groups | 17
Many organizations set up self-managed or empowered teams as an important way of improving performance and they are often used as a way of introducing a continuous improvement approach. These teams tend to meet regularly to discuss and put forward ideas for improved methods of working or customer service in their areas. Some manufacturers have used multi-skilled self-managed teams to improve manufacturing processes, to enhance worker participation and improve morale. Self-managed teams give employees an opportunity to take a more active role in their working lives and to develop new skills and abilities. This may result in reduced staff turnover and less absenteeism.

Self-organizing teams are usually formed spontaneously in response to an issue, idea or challenge. This may be the challenge of creating a radically new product, or solving a tough production problem. In Japan, the encouragement of self-organizing teams has been used as a way of stimulating discussion and debate about strategic issues so that radical and innovative new strategies emerge. By using a self-organizing team approach companies were able to tap into the collective wisdom and energy of interested and motivated employees.

Increasingly, virtual team are also common. A virtual team is one whose primary means of communicating is electronic, with only occasional phone and face-to-face communication, if at all. However, there is no single point at which a team 'becomes' a virtual team (Zigurs, 2003). Table 3 contains a summary of benefits virtual groups provide to organizations and individuals, as well as the potential challenges and disadvantages virtual groups present.

**Table 3. Teams have organizational and individual benefits, as well as possible challenges and disadvantages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Organization Benefits</th>
<th>The Individual Benefits</th>
<th>Possible Challenges and Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People can be hired with the skills and competences needed regardless of location</td>
<td>People can work from anywhere at any time</td>
<td>Communicating effectively across distances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In some cases, working across different time zones can extend the working day</td>
<td>Physical location is not a recruitment issue; relocation is unnecessary</td>
<td>Management lacks the planning necessary for a virtual group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can enable products to be developed more quickly</td>
<td>Travelling expenses and commuting time are cut</td>
<td>Technology is complicated and/or unfamiliar to some or all members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses associated with travel and relocation can be cut; Carbon emissions can be reduced.</td>
<td>People can work from anywhere at any time</td>
<td>Difficult to coordinate times and hard to squeeze all the information into a more narrow time slot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why do (only some) teams succeed?

Clearly, there are no hard-and-fast rules which lead to team effectiveness. The determinants of a successful team are complex and not equivalent to following a set of prescriptions. However, the results of poor teamwork can be expensive, so it is useful to draw on research, experience and case studies to explore some general guidelines. What do I mean by 'team effectiveness'? – the achievement of goals alone? Where do the achievements of individual members fit in? and How does team member satisfaction contribute to team effectiveness?

Borrowing from Adair's 1983 leadership model, the left-hand side of Figure 3 shows the main constituents of team effectiveness: the satisfaction of individual membership needs, successful team interaction and the achievement of team tasks. These elements are not discrete, so Figure 3 shows them as overlapping. For example, team member satisfaction will be derived not only from the achievement of tasks but also from the quality of team relationships and the more social aspects of teamworking: people who work almost entirely on their own, such as teleworkers and self-employed business owner-managers, often miss the opportunity to bounce ideas off colleagues in team situations. The experience of solitude in their work can, over time, create a sense of isolation, and impair their performance. The effectiveness of a team should also relate to the next step, to what happens after the achievement of team goals.

![Figure 3 The internal elements of team effectiveness](image)

The three elements could be reconfigured as an iceberg, most of which is below the water's surface (the right-hand side of Figure 3). Superficial observation of teams in organizations might suggest that most, if not all, energy is devoted to the explicit task (what is to be achieved, by when, with what budget and what resources). Naturally, this is important. But too often the concealed part of the iceberg (how the team will work together) is neglected. As with real icebergs, shipwrecks can ensue.

For instance, if working in a particular team leaves its members antagonistic towards each other and disenchanted with the organization to the point of looking for new jobs, then it can hardly be regarded as fully effective, even if it achieves its goals. The measure of team effectiveness could be how well the team has prepared its members for the transition to new projects, and whether the members would relish the thought of working with each other again.

In addition to what happens inside a team there are external influences that impact upon team operations. The factors shown in Figure 4 interact with each other in ways that affect the team and its development. We don't fully understand the complexity of these interactions and combinations. The best that we can do is discuss each factor in turn and consider some of the interactions between them and how they relate to team effectiveness. For instance, discussions about whether the wider culture of an organization supports and rewards teamworking, whether a team's internal and/or external customers clearly specify their requirements and whether the expectations of a team match those of its sponsor will all either help or hinder a team's ongoing vitality.
Conclusion

This reading has addressed four questions: what characterizes a group, what characterizes a team, how project teams are organized, and what can make teams ineffective. Groups can be formal or informal depending on the circumstances. Work groups or teams are generally more focused on particular tasks and outcomes, and use processes that aim to achieve a unity of purpose, communication and action. I looked at six major types of team: functional, project, matrix, contract, self-managing, self-organizing, and virtual teams. Each form has strengths and weaknesses that suit particular types of project within particular organizational cultures, and teams often involve a mixture of different forms. Team effectiveness is shaped by internal influences – task achievement, individual membership and team interaction – as well as external influences, such as customers, sponsors, other teams, and organizational culture.

References

2. Cooperation

From the Noba Project

By Jake P. Moskowitz and Paul K. Piff
University of California, Irvine

- PDF Download
- Altruism
- competition
- cooperation
- prisoner's dilemma

Learning Objectives

- Define “cooperation”
- Distinguish between different social value orientations
- List 2 influences on cooperation
- Explain 2 methods psychologists use to research cooperation

Introduction

People cooperate with others throughout their life. Whether on the playground with friends, at home with family, or at work with colleagues, cooperation is a natural instinct (Keltner, Kogan, Piff, & Saturn, 2014). Children as young as 14 months cooperate with others on joint tasks (Warneken, Chen, & Tomasello, 2006; Warneken & Tomasello, 2007). Humans’ closest evolutionary relatives, chimpanzees and bonobos, maintain long-term cooperative relationships as well, sharing resources and caring for each other’s young (de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Langergraber, Mitani, & Vigilant, 2007). Ancient animal remains found near early human settlements suggest that our ancestors hunted in cooperative groups (Mithen, 1996). Cooperation, it seems, is embedded in our evolutionary heritage.

Yet, cooperation can also be difficult to achieve; there are often breakdowns in people’s ability to work effectively in teams, or in their willingness to collaborate with others. Even with issues that can only be solved through large-scale cooperation, such as climate change and world hunger, people can have difficulties joining forces with others to take collective action. Psychologists have identified numerous individual and situational factors that influence the effectiveness of cooperation across many areas of life. From the trust that people place in others to the lines they draw between “us” and “them,” many different processes shape cooperation. This module will explore these individual, situational, and cultural influences on cooperation.
The Prisoner’s Dilemma

Imagine that you are a participant in a social experiment. As you sit down, you are told that you will be playing a game with another person in a separate room. The other participant is also part of the experiment but the two of you will never meet. In the experiment, there is the possibility that you will be awarded some money. Both you and your unknown partner are required to make a choice: either choose to “cooperate,” maximizing your combined reward, or “defect,” (not cooperate) and thereby maximize your individual reward. The choice you make, along with that of the other participant, will result in one of three unique outcomes to this task, illustrated below in Figure 1. If you and your partner both cooperate (1), you will each receive $5. If you and your partner both defect (2), you will each receive $2. However, if one partner defects and the other partner cooperates (3), the defector will receive $8, while the cooperator will receive nothing. Remember, you and your partner cannot discuss your strategy. Which would you choose? Striking out on your own promises big rewards but you could also lose everything. Cooperating, on the other hand, offers the best benefit for the most people but requires a high level of trust.

This scenario, in which two people independently choose between cooperation and defection, is known as the prisoner's dilemma. It gets its name from the situation in which two prisoners who have committed a crime are given the opportunity to either (A) both confess their crime (and get a moderate sentence), (B) rat out their accomplice (and get a lesser sentence), or (C) both remain silent (and avoid punishment altogether). Psychologists use various forms of the prisoner's dilemma scenario to study self-interest and cooperation. Whether framed as a monetary game or a prison game, the prisoner's dilemma illuminates a conflict at the core of many decisions to cooperate: it pits the motivation to maximize personal reward against the motivation to maximize gains for the group (you and your partner combined).

For someone trying to maximize his or her own personal reward, the most “rational” choice is to defect (not cooperate), because defecting always results in a larger personal reward, regardless of the partner’s choice. However, when the two participants view their partnership as a joint effort (such as a friendly relationship), cooperating is the
best strategy of all, since it provides the largest combined sum of money ($10—which they share), as opposed to partial cooperation ($8), or mutual defection ($4). In other words, although defecting represents the “best” choice from an individual perspective, it is also the worst choice to make for the group as a whole.

This divide between personal and collective interests is a key obstacle that prevents people from cooperating. Think back to our earlier definition of cooperation: cooperation is when multiple partners work together toward a common goal that will benefit everyone. As is frequent in these types of scenarios, even though cooperation may benefit the whole group, individuals are often able to earn even larger, personal rewards by defecting—as demonstrated in the prisoner’s dilemma example above.

You can see a small, real-world example of the prisoner’s dilemma phenomenon at live music concerts. At venues with seating, many audience members will choose to stand, hoping to get a better view of the musicians onstage. As a result, the people sitting directly behind those now-standing people are also forced to stand to see the action onstage. This creates a chain reaction in which the entire audience now has to stand, just to see over the heads of the crowd in front of them. While choosing to stand may improve one’s own concert experience, it creates a literal barrier for the rest of the audience, hurting the overall experience of the group.

Simple models of rational self-interest predict 100% defection in cooperative tasks. That is, if people were only interested in benefitting themselves, we would always expect to see selfish behavior. Instead, there is a surprising tendency to cooperate in the prisoner’s dilemma and similar tasks (Batson & Moran, 1999; Oosterbeek, Sloof, Van De Kuilen, 2004). Given the clear benefits to defect, why then do some people choose to cooperate, whereas others choose to defect?

Individual Differences in Cooperation

Social Value Orientation

One key factor related to individual differences in cooperation is the extent to which people value not only their own outcomes, but also the outcomes of others. Social value orientation (SVO) describes people’s preferences when dividing important resources between themselves and others (Messick & McClintock, 1968). A person might, for example, generally be competitive with others, or cooperative, or self-sacrificing. People with different social values differ in the importance they place on their own positive outcomes relative to the outcomes of others. For example, you might give your friend gas money because she drives you to school, even though that means you will have less spending money for the weekend. In this example, you are demonstrating a cooperative orientation.

People generally fall into one of three categories of SVO: cooperative, individualistic, or competitive. While most people want to bring about positive outcomes for all (cooperative orientation), certain types of people are less concerned about the outcomes of others (individualistic), or even seek to undermine others in order to get ahead (competitive orientation).

Are you curious about your own orientation? One technique psychologists use to sort people into one of these categories is to have them play a series of decomposed games—short laboratory exercises that involve making a choice from various distributions of resources between oneself and an “other.” Consider the example shown in Figure 2, which offers three different ways to distribute a valuable resource (such as money). People with competitive SVOs, who try to maximize their relative advantage over others, are most likely to pick option A. People with cooperative SVOs, who try to maximize joint gain for both themselves and others, are more likely to split the resource evenly, picking option B. People with individualistic SVOs, who always maximize gains to the self, regardless of how it affects others, will most likely pick option C.
Researchers have found that a person's SVO predicts how cooperative he or she is in both laboratory experiments and the outside world. For example, in one laboratory experiment, groups of participants were asked to play a commons dilemma game. In this game, participants each took turns drawing from a central collection of points to be exchanged for real money at the end of the experiment. These points represented a common-pool resource for the group, like valuable goods or services in society (such as farm land, ground water, and air quality) that are freely accessible to everyone but prone to overuse and degradation. Participants were told that, while the common-pool resource would gradually replenish after the end of every turn, taking too much of the resource too quickly would eventually deplete it. The researchers found that participants with cooperative SVOs withdrew fewer resources from the common-pool than those with competitive and individualistic SVOs, indicating a greater willingness to cooperate with others and act in a way that is sustainable for the group (Kramer, McClintock, & Messick, 1986; Roch & Samuelson, 1997).

Research has also shown that people with cooperative SVOs are more likely to commute to work using public transportation—an act of cooperation that can help reduce carbon emissions—rather than drive themselves, compared to people with competitive and individualistic SVOs (Van Vugt, Meertens, & Van Lange, 1995; Van Vugt, Van Lange, & Meertens, 1996). People with cooperative SVOs also more frequently engage in behavior intended to help others, such as volunteering and giving money to charity (McClintock & Allison, 1989; Van Lange, Bekkers, Schuyl, Van Vugt, 2007). Taken together, these findings show that people with cooperative SVOs act with greater consideration for the overall well-being of others and the group as a whole, using resources in moderation and taking more effortful measures (like using public transportation to protect the environment) to benefit the group.
Empathic Ability

**Empathy** is the ability to feel and understand another's emotional experience. When we empathize with someone else, we take on that person's perspective, imagining the world from his or her point of view and vicariously experiencing his or her emotions (Davis, 1994; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). Research has shown that when people empathize with their partner, they act with greater cooperation and overall altruism—the desire to help the partner, even at a potential cost to the self. People that can experience and understand the emotions of others are better able to work with others in groups, earning higher job performance ratings on average from their supervisors, even after adjusting for different types of work and other aspects of personality (Côté & Miners, 2006).

When empathizing with a person in distress, the natural desire to help is often expressed as a desire to cooperate. In one study, just before playing an economic game with a partner in another room, participants were given a note revealing that their partner had just gone through a rough breakup and needed some cheering up. While half of the subjects were urged by the experimenters to “remain objective and detached,” the other half were told to “try and imagine how the other person feels.” Though both groups received the same information about their partner, those who were encouraged to engage in empathy—by actively experiencing their partner's emotions—acted with greater cooperation in the economic game (Batson & Moran, 1999). The researchers also found that people who empathized with their partners were more likely to act cooperatively, even after being told that their partner had already made a choice to not cooperate (Batson & Ahmad, 2001)! Evidence of the link between empathy and cooperation has even been found in studies of preschool children (Marcus, Telleen, & Roke, 1979). From a very early age, emotional understanding can foster cooperation.

Although empathizing with a partner can lead to more cooperation between two people, it can also undercut cooperation within larger groups. In groups, empathizing with a single person can lead people to abandon broader cooperation in favor of helping only the target individual. In one study, participants were asked to play a cooperative game with three partners. In the game, participants were asked to (A) donate resources to a central pool, (B) donate resources to a specific group member, or (C) keep the resources for themselves. According to the rules, all donations to the central pool would be increased by 50% then distributed evenly, resulting in a net gain to the entire group. Objectively, this might seem to be the best option. However, when participants were encouraged to imagine the feelings of one of their partners said to be in distress, they were more likely to donate their tickets to that partner and not engage in cooperation with the group—rather than remaining detached and objective (Batson et al., 1995). Though empathy can create strong cooperative bonds between individuals, it can sometimes lead to actions that, despite being well-intentioned, end up undermining the group's best interests.
Situational Influences of Cooperation

Communication and Commitment

Open communication between people is one of the best ways to promote cooperation (Dawes, McTavish, & Shaklee, 1977; Dawes, 1988). This is because communication provides an opportunity to size up the trustworthiness of others. It also affords us a chance to prove our own trustworthiness, by verbally committing to cooperate with others. Since cooperation requires people to enter a state of vulnerability and trust with partners, we are very sensitive to the social cues and interactions of potential partners before deciding to cooperate with them.

In one line of research, groups of participants were allowed to chat for five minutes before playing a multi-round “public goods” game. During the chats, the players were allowed to discuss game strategies and make verbal commitments about their in-game actions. While some groups were able to reach a consensus on a strategy (e.g., “always cooperate”), other groups failed to reach a consensus within their allotted five minutes or even picked strategies that ensured noncooperation (e.g., “every person for themselves”). The researchers found that when group members made explicit commitments to each other to cooperate, they ended up honoring those commitments and acting with greater cooperation. Interestingly, the effect of face-to-face verbal commitments persisted even when the cooperation game itself was completely anonymous (Kerr and Kaufman-Gilliland, 1994; Kerr, Garst, Lewandowski, & Harris, 1997). This suggests that those who explicitly commit to cooperate are driven not by the fear of external punishment by group members, but by their own personal desire to honor such commitments. In other words, once people make a specific promise to cooperate, they are driven by “that still, small voice”—the voice of their own inner conscience—to fulfill that commitment (Kerr et al., 1997).
When it comes to cooperation, trust is key (Pruitt & Kimmel, 1977; Parks, Henager, & Scamahorn, 1996; Chaudhuri, Sopher, & Strand, 2002). Working with others toward a common goal requires a level of faith that our partners will repay our hard work and generosity, and not take advantage of us for their own selfish gains. Social trust, or the belief that another person's actions will be beneficial to one's own interests (Kramer, 1999), enables people to work together as a
single unit, pooling their resources to accomplish more than they could individually. Trusting others, however, depends on their actions and reputation.

One common example of the difficulties in trusting others that you might recognize from being a student occurs when you are assigned a group project. Many students dislike group projects because they worry about “social loafing”—the way that one person expends less effort but still benefits from the efforts of the group. Imagine, for example, that you and five other students are assigned to work together on a difficult class project. At first, you and your group members split the work up evenly. As the project continues, however, you notice that one member of your team isn’t doing his “fair share.” He fails to show up to meetings, his work is sloppy, and he seems generally uninterested in contributing to the project. After a while, you might begin to suspect that this student is trying to get by with minimal effort, perhaps assuming others will pick up the slack. Your group now faces a difficult choice: either join the slacker and abandon all work on the project, causing it to collapse, or keep cooperating and allow for the possibility that the uncooperative student may receive a decent grade for others’ work.

If this scenario sounds familiar to you, you’re not alone. Economists call this situation the free rider problem—when individuals benefit from the cooperation of others without contributing anything in return (Grossman & Hart, 1980). Although these sorts of actions may benefit the free rider in the short-term, free riding can have a negative impact on a person’s social reputation over time. In the above example, for instance, the “free riding” student may develop a reputation as lazy or untrustworthy, leading others to be less willing to work with him or her in the future.

Indeed, research has shown that a poor reputation for cooperation can serve as a warning sign for others not to cooperate with the person in disrepute. For example, in one experiment involving a group economic game, participants seen as being uncooperative were punished harshly by their fellow participants. According to the rules of the game, individuals took turns being either a “donor” or a “receiver” over the course of multiple rounds. If donors chose to give up a small sum of actual money, receivers would receive a slightly larger sum, resulting in an overall net gain. However, unbeknownst to the group, one participant was secretly instructed never to donate. After just a few rounds of play, this individual was effectively shunned by the rest of the group, receiving almost zero donations from the other members (Milinski, Semmann, Bakker, & Krambeck, 2001). When someone is seen being consistently uncooperative, other people have no incentive to trust him/her, resulting in a collapse of cooperation.

On the other hand, people are more likely to cooperate with others who have a good reputation for cooperation and are therefore deemed trustworthy. In one study, people played a group economic game similar to the one described above: over multiple rounds, they took turns choosing whether to donate to other group members. Over the course of the game, donations were more frequently given to individuals who had been generous in earlier rounds of the game (Wedekind & Milinski, 2000). In other words, individuals seen cooperating with others were afforded a reputational advantage, earning them more partners willing to cooperate and a larger overall monetary reward.
Group Identification

Sometimes the groups with which we identify can be formed based on preferences. Are you a dog person or a cat person? Just knowing that someone else shares your preference can affect the cooperation between you. [Image: Doris Meta F, https://goo.gl/k8Zi6N, CC BY-NC 2.0, https://goo.gl/tgFydH]

Another factor that can impact cooperation is a person's social identity, or the extent to which he or she identifies as a member of a particular social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979/1986). People can identify with groups of all shapes and sizes: a group might be relatively small, such as a local high school class, or very large, such as a national citizenship or a political party. While these groups are often bound together by shared goals and values, they can also form according to seemingly arbitrary qualities, such as musical taste, hometown, or even completely randomized assignment, such as a coin toss (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Bigler, Brown, & Markell, 2001; Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980). When members of a group place a high value on their group membership, their identity (the way they view themselves) can be shaped in part by the goals and values of that group.

Research shows that when people's group identity is emphasized (for example, when laboratory participants are referred to as “group members” rather than “individuals”), they are less likely to act selfishly in a commons dilemma game. In such experiments, so-called “group members” withdraw fewer resources, with the outcome of promoting the sustainability of the group (Brewer & Kramer, 1986). In one study, students who strongly identified with their university were less likely to leave a cooperative group of fellow students when given an attractive option to exit (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). In addition, the strength of a person's identification with a group or organization is a key driver behind participation in large-scale cooperative efforts, such as collective action in political and workers' groups (Klandersman, 2002), and engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors (Crapanzano & Byrne, 2000).

Emphasizing group identity is not without its costs: although it can increase cooperation within groups, it can also undermine cooperation between groups. Researchers have found that groups interacting with other groups are...
more competitive and less cooperative than individuals interacting with other individuals, a phenomenon known as interindividual–intergroup discontinuity (Schopler & Insko, 1999; Wildschut, Pinter, Vevea, Insko, & Schopler, 2003). For example, groups interacting with other groups displayed greater self-interest and reduced cooperation in a prisoner’s dilemma game than did individuals completing the same tasks with other individuals (Insko et al., 1987). Such problems with trust and cooperation are largely due to people’s general reluctance to cooperate with members of an outgroup, or those outside the boundaries of one’s own social group (Allport, 1954; Van Vugt, Biel, Snyder, & Tyler, 2000). Outgroups do not have to be explicit rivals for this effect to take place. Indeed, in one study, simply telling groups of participants that other groups preferred a different style of painting led them to behave less cooperatively than pairs of individuals completing the same task (Insko, Kirchner, Pinter, Efaw, & Wildschut, 2005). Though a strong group identity can bind individuals within the group together, it can also drive divisions between different groups, reducing overall trust and cooperation on a larger scope.

Under the right circumstances, however, even rival groups can be turned into cooperative partners in the presence of superordinate goals. In a classic demonstration of this phenomenon, Muzafer Sherif and colleagues observed the cooperative and competing behaviors of two groups of twelve-year-old boys at a summer camp in Robber’s Cave State Park, in Oklahoma (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). The twenty-two boys in the study were all carefully interviewed to determine that none of them knew each other beforehand. Importantly, Sherif and colleagues kept both groups unaware of each other’s existence, arranging for them to arrive at separate times and occupy different areas of the camp. Within each group, the participants quickly bonded and established their own group identity—“The Eagles” and “The Rattlers”—identifying leaders and creating flags decorated with their own group’s name and symbols.

For the next phase of the experiment, the researchers revealed the existence of each group to the other, leading to reactions of anger, territorialism, and verbal abuse between the two. This behavior was further compounded by a series of competitive group activities, such as baseball and tug-of-war, leading the two groups to engage in even more spiteful behavior: The Eagles set fire to ‘The Rattlers’ flag, and The Rattlers retaliated by ransacking The Eagles’ cabin, overturning beds and stealing their belongings. Eventually, the two groups refused to eat together in the same dining hall, and they had to be physically separated to avoid further conflict.

However, in the final phase of the experiment, Sherif and colleagues introduced a dilemma to both groups that could only be solved through mutual cooperation. The researchers told both groups that there was a shortage of drinking water in the camp, supposedly due to “vandals” damaging the water supply. As both groups gathered around the water supply, attempting to find a solution, members from each group offered suggestions and worked together to fix the problem. Since the lack of drinking water affected both groups equally, both were highly motivated to try and resolve the issue. Finally, after 45 minutes, the two groups managed to clear a stuck pipe, allowing fresh water to flow. The researchers concluded that when conflicting groups share a superordinate goal, they are capable of shifting their attitudes and bridging group differences to become cooperative partners. The insights from this study have important implications for group-level cooperation. Since many problems facing the world today, such as climate change and nuclear proliferation, affect individuals of all nations, and are best dealt with through the coordinated efforts of different groups and countries, emphasizing the shared nature of these dilemmas may enable otherwise competing groups to engage in cooperative and collective action.
Culture can have a powerful effect on people’s beliefs about and ways they interact with others. Might culture also affect a person’s tendency toward cooperation? To answer this question, Joseph Henrich and his colleagues surveyed people from 15 small-scale societies around the world, located in places such as Zimbabwe, Bolivia, and Indonesia. These groups varied widely in the ways they traditionally interacted with their environments: some practiced small-scale agriculture, others foraged for food, and still others were nomadic herders of animals (Henrich et al., 2001).

To measure their tendency toward cooperation, individuals of each society were asked to play the ultimatum game, a task similar in nature to the prisoner’s dilemma. The game has two players: Player A (the “allocator”) is given a sum of money (equal to two days’ wages) and allowed to donate any amount of it to Player B (the “responder”). Player B can
then either accept or reject Player A’s offer. If Player B accepts the offer, both players keep their agreed-upon amounts. However, if Player B rejects the offer, then neither player receives anything. In this scenario, the responder can use his/her authority to punish unfair offers, even though it requires giving up his or her own reward. In turn, Player A must be careful to propose an acceptable offer to Player B, while still trying to maximize his/her own outcome in the game.

According to a model of rational economics, a self-interested Player B should always choose to accept any offer, no matter how small or unfair. As a result, Player A should always try to offer the minimum possible amount to Player B, in order to maximize his/her own reward. Instead, the researchers found that people in these 15 societies donated on average 39% of the sum to their partner (Henrich et al., 2001). This number is almost identical to the amount that people of Western cultures donate when playing the ultimatum game (Oosterbeek et al., 2004). These findings suggest that allocators in the game, instead of offering the least possible amount, try to maintain a sense of fairness and “shared rewards” in the game, in part so that their offers will not be rejected by the responder.

Henrich and colleagues (2001) also observed significant variation between cultures in terms of their level of cooperation. Specifically, the researchers found that the extent to which individuals in a culture needed to collaborate with each other to gather resources to survive predicted how likely they were to be cooperative. For example, among the people of the Lamelara in Indonesia, who survive by hunting whales in groups of a dozen or more individuals, donations in the ultimatum game were extremely high—approximately 58% of the total sum. In contrast, the Machiguenga people of Peru, who are generally economically independent at the family level, donated much less on average—about 26% of the total sum. The interdependence of people for survival, therefore, seems to be a key component of why people decide to cooperate with others.

Though the various survival strategies of small-scale societies might seem quite remote from your own experiences, take a moment to think about how your life is dependent on collaboration with others. Very few of us in industrialized societies live in houses we build ourselves, wear clothes we make ourselves, or eat food we grow ourselves. Instead, we depend on others to provide specialized resources and products, such as food, clothing, and shelter that are essential to our survival. Studies show that Americans give about 40% of their sum in the ultimatum game—less than the Lamelara give, but on par with most of the small-scale societies sampled by Henrich and colleagues (Oosterbeek et al., 2004). While living in an industrialized society might not require us to hunt in groups like the Lamelara do, we still depend on others to supply the resources we need to survive.

Conclusion

Cooperation is an important part of our everyday lives. Practically every feature of modern social life, from the taxes we pay to the street signs we follow, involves multiple parties working together toward shared goals. There are many factors that help determine whether people will successfully cooperate, from their culture of origin and the trust they place in their partners, to the degree to which they empathize with others. Although cooperation can sometimes be difficult to achieve, certain diplomatic practices, such as emphasizing shared goals and engaging in open communication, can promote teamwork and even break down rivalries. Though choosing not to cooperate can sometimes achieve a larger reward for an individual in the short term, cooperation is often necessary to ensure that the group as a whole—including all members of that group—achieves the optimal outcome.

Take a Quiz

An optional quiz is available to accompany this chapter here: https://nobaproject.com/modules/cooperation
Discussion Questions

1. Which groups do you identify with? Consider sports teams, home towns, and universities. How does your identification with these groups make you feel about other members of these groups? What about members of competing groups?

2. Thinking of all the accomplishments of humanity throughout history which do you believe required the greatest amounts of cooperation? Why?

3. In your experience working on group projects—such as group projects for a class—what have you noticed regarding the themes presented in this module (eg. Competition, free riding, cooperation, trust)? How could you use the material you have just learned to make group projects more effective?

Vocabulary

Altruism
A desire to improve the welfare of another person, at a potential cost to the self and without any expectation of reward.

Common-pool resource
A collective product or service that is freely available to all individuals of a society, but is vulnerable to overuse and degradation.

Commons dilemma game
A game in which members of a group must balance their desire for personal gain against the deterioration and possible collapse of a resource.

Cooperation
The coordination of multiple partners toward a common goal that will benefit everyone involved.

Decomposed games
A task in which an individual chooses from multiple allocations of resources to distribute between him- or herself and another person.

Empathy
The ability to vicariously experience the emotions of another person.

Free rider problem
A situation in which one or more individuals benefit from a common-pool resource without paying their share of the cost.

Interindividual-intergroup discontinuity
The tendency for relations between groups to be less cooperative than relations between individuals.

Outgroup
A social category or group with which an individual does not identify.

Prisoner's dilemma
A classic paradox in which two individuals must independently choose between defection (maximizing reward to the self) and cooperation (maximizing reward to the group).
Rational self-interest
The principle that people will make logical decisions based on maximizing their own gains and benefits.

Social identity
A person's sense of who they are, based on their group membership(s).

Social value orientation (SVO)
An assessment of how an individual prefers to allocate resources between him- or herself and another person.

State of vulnerability
When a person places him or herself in a position in which he or she might be exploited or harmed. This is often done out of trust that others will not exploit the vulnerability.

Ultimatum game
An economic game in which a proposer (Player A) can offer a subset of resources to a responder (Player B), who can then either accept or reject the given proposal.

Outside Resources

http://psr.sagepub.com/content/8/3/281.abstract

http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Sherif/index.htm

Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment – An online version of Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif's (1954/1961) study, which includes photos.
http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Sherif/

Video: A clip from a reality TV show, “Golden Balls”, that pits players against each other in a high-stakes Prisoners' Dilemma situation.
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=p3Uos2fzfJ0%3Fcolor%3Dred%26amp%3Bmode%3Dstandard%26amp%3Bshowinfo%3D0%26amp%3Borigin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Describes recent research showing how chimpanzees naturally cooperate with each other to accomplish tasks.
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=fME0_RsEXf%3Fcolor%3Dred%26amp%3Bmode%3Dstandard%26amp%3Bshowinfo%3D0%26amp%3Borigin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: The Empathic Civilization – A 10 minute, 39 second animated talk that explores the topics of empathy.
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=xjarMIXA2q%3Fcolor%3Dred%26amp%3Bmode%3Dstandard%26amp%3Bshowinfo%3D0%26amp%3Borigin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Tragedy of the Commons, Part 1 – What happens when many people seek to share the same, limited Cooperation | 35
resource?

https://youtube.com/
watch?v=KZDjPnzgoe0%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Tragedy of the Commons, Part 2 – This video (which is 1 minute, 27 seconds) discusses how cooperation can be a solution to the commons dilemma.

https://youtube.com/
watch?v=IVwk6VlxBXg%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Understanding the Prisoners' Dilemma.

https://youtube.com/
watch?v=t9Lo2fgxWHw%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Why Some People are More Altruistic Than Others – A 12 minute, 21 second TED talk about altruism. A psychologist, Abigail Marsh, discusses the research about altruism.

https://youtube.com/
watch?v=m4KbUSRfnR4%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Web: Take an online test to determine your Social Values Orientation (SVO).
http://vlab.ethz.ch/svo/index-normal.html

Web: What is Social Identity? – A brief explanation of social identity, which includes specific examples.
http://people.howstuffworks.com/what-is-social-identity.htm

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3. Social Comparison

*From the Noba Project*

By Stephen Garcia and Arnor Halldorsson

University of Michigan

When athletes compete in a race, they are able to observe and compare their performance against those of their competitors. In the same way, all people naturally engage in mental comparisons with the people around them during the course of daily life. These evaluations can impact our motivation and feelings. In this module, you will learn about the process of social comparison: its definition, consequences, and the factors that affect it.

- PDF Download
- downward comparison
- Dunning-Kruger Effect
- Frog Pond Effect
- N-Effect
- Self-esteem
- Self-evaluation
- upward comparison

**Learning Objectives**

- Understand the reasons people make social comparisons.
- Identify consequences of social comparison.
- Understand the Self-Evaluation Maintenance Model.
- Explain situational factors that can affect social comparison.

**Introduction: Social Comparison**

One pleasant Saturday afternoon, Mr. Jones arrives home from the car dealership in a brand-new Mercedes-Benz C-Class, the entry-level sedan in the Mercedes family of cars. Although Mercedes-Benzes are common in Europe, they are often viewed as status symbols in Mr. Jones' neighborhood in North America. This new car is a huge upgrade from his previous car. Excited, Mr. Jones immediately drives around the block and into town to show it off. He is thrilled with his purchase for a full week—that is, until he sees his neighbor across the street, Mr. Smith, driving a brand-new Mercedes S-Class, the highest tier of Mercedes sedans. Mr. Smith notices Mr. Jones from a distance and waves to him with a big smile. Climbing into his C-Class, Mr. Jones suddenly feels disappointed with his purchase and even feels envious of Mr. Smith. Now his C-Class feels just as uncool as his old car.

Mr. Smith is experiencing the effects of *social comparison*. Occurring frequently in our lives, social comparison shapes our perceptions, memory, and behavior—even regarding the most trivial of issues. In this module, we will take a closer look at the reasons we make social comparisons and the consequences of the social comparison process.
Social Comparison: Basics

In 1954, psychologist Leon Festinger hypothesized that people compare themselves to others in order to fulfill a basic human desire: the need for self-evaluation. He called this process social comparison theory. At the core of his theory is the idea that people come to know about themselves—their own abilities, successes, and personality—by comparing themselves with others. These comparisons can be divided into two basic categories.

In one category, we consider social norms and the opinions of others. Specifically, we compare our own opinions and values to those of others when our own self-evaluation is unclear. For example, you might not be certain about your position on a hotly contested issue, such as the legality of abortion. Or, you might not be certain about which fork to use first in a multi-course place setting. In these types of instances people are prone to look toward others—to make social comparisons—to help fill in the gaps.

Imagine an American exchange student arriving in India for the first time, a country where the culture is drastically different from his own. He notices quickly through observing others—i.e., social comparison—that when greeting a person, it is normal to place his own palms together rather than shaking the other person's hand. This comparison informs him of how he should behave in the surrounding social context.

The second category of social comparison pertains to our abilities and performance. In these cases, the need for self-evaluation is driven by another fundamental desire: to perform better and better—as Festinger (1954) put it, “a unidirectional drive upward.” In essence, we compare our performance not only to evaluate ourselves but also to benchmark our performance related to another person. If we observe or even anticipate that a specific person is doing better than us at some ability then we may be motivated to boost our performance level. Take, for example, a realistic scenario where Olivia uses social comparison to gauge her abilities: Olivia is a high school student who often spends a few hours in her backyard shooting a soccer ball at her homemade goal. A friend of hers suggests she try out for the school's soccer team. Olivia accepts her friend's suggestion, although nervously, doubting she's good enough to make the team. On the day of tryouts, Olivia gets her gear ready and starts walking towards the soccer field. As she approaches, she feels butterflies in her stomach and her legs get wobbly. But, glancing towards the other candidates who have arrived early to take a few practice shots at the goal, she notices...
that their aim is inconsistent and they frequently miss the goal. Seeing this, Olivia feels more relaxed, and she confidently marches onto the field, ready to show everyone her skills.

Relevance and Similarity

There are important factors, however, that determine whether people will engage in social comparison. First, the performance dimension has to be relevant to the self (Festinger, 1954). For example, if excelling in academics is more important to you than excelling in sports, you are more likely to compare yourself with others in terms of academic rather than athletic performance. Relevance is also important when assessing opinions. If the issue at hand is relevant to you, you will compare your opinion to others; if not, you most likely won't even bother. Relevance is thus a necessary precondition for social comparison.

A secondary question is, "to whom do people compare themselves?" Generally speaking, people compare themselves to those who are similar (Festinger, 1954; Goethals & Darley, 1977), whether similar in personal characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnic background, hair color, etc.) or in terms of performance (e.g., both being of comparable ability or both being neck-and-neck in a race). For example, a casual tennis player will not compare her performance to that of a professional, but rather to that of another casual tennis player. The same is true of opinions. People will cross-reference their own opinions on an issue with others who are similar to them rather than dissimilar (e.g., ethnic background or economic status).

Direction of Comparison

Social comparison is a bi-directional phenomenon where we can compare ourselves to people who are better than us—"upward comparisons"—or worse than us—"downward comparisons." Engaging in either of these two comparisons on a performance dimension can affect our self-evaluation. On one hand, upward comparisons on relevant dimensions can threaten our self-evaluation and jeopardize self-esteem (Tesser, 1988). On the other hand, they can also lead to joy and admiration for others' accomplishments on dimensions that are not relevant to the self, where one's self-evaluation is not under threat. For example, an academic overachiever who distinguishes himself by having two advanced degrees, both a PhD and a law degree, may not enjoy meeting another individual with a PhD, a law degree, and an MBA, but may well enjoy meeting a fellow overachiever in a domain that is not self-relevant, such as a famous NASCAR racer or professional hockey player.

Downward comparisons may boost our self-evaluation on relevant dimensions, leading to a self-enhancement effect (Wills, 1981), such as when an individual suffering from an illness makes downward comparisons with those suffering even more. A person enduring treatment for cancer, for instance, might feel better about his own side effects if he learns that an acquaintance suffered worse side effects from the same treatment. More recent findings have also shown that downward comparisons can also lead to feelings of scorn (Fiske, 2011), such as when those of a younger generation look down upon the elderly. In these cases, the boost to self-evaluation is so strong that it leads to an exaggerated sense of pride.

Interestingly, the direction of comparison and a person's emotional response can also depend on the counterfactual—"what might have been"—that comes most easily to mind. For example, one might think that an Olympic silver medalist would feel happier than a bronze medalist. After all, placing second is more prestigious than placing third. However, a classic study by Victoria Medvec, Scott Madey, and Thomas Gilovich (1995) found the opposite effect: bronze medalists were actually happier than silver medalists. The reason for this effect is that silver medalist's focus on having fallen short of achieving the gold (so close!), essentially turning a possible downward comparison into

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Comparing your behavior to that of other people might make you jealous, regretful or more motivated. Lapel stickers and online badges that proclaim “I voted” or “I gave blood” are common examples of leveraging social comparison to achieve positive social outcomes. [Image: CAVE CANEM, http://goo.gl/ifKSiE, CC BY 2.0, http://goo.gl/v4Y0Zv]

Table 1: The effects of social comparison.

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<tr>
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<th>Upward Comparison</th>
<th>Downward Comparison</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Effects</strong></td>
<td>Hope, Inspiration</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Effects</strong></td>
<td>Dissatisfaction, Envy</td>
<td>Scorn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The effects of social comparison.

Consequences of Social Comparison

The social comparison process has been associated with numerous consequences. For one, social comparison can impact self-esteem (Tesser, 1988), especially when doing well relative to others. For example, having the best final score in a class can increase your self-esteem quite a bit. Social comparison can also lead to feelings of regret (White, Langer, Yariv, & Welch, 2006), as when comparing the negative outcome of one’s investment strategy to the positive outcome of a different strategy taken by a neighbor. Social comparison can also lead to feelings of envy (Fiske, 2011; Salovey & Rodin, 1984), as when someone with thinning hair envies the thick hair of a colleague.

Social comparison can also have interesting behavioral consequences. If you were to observe a discrepancy in performance between yourself and another person, then you might behave more competitively (Garcia, Tor, & Schiff, 2013), as you attempt to minimize the discrepancy. If, for example, you are among the top 10% on your class mid-term you might feel competitive with the other top students. Although competition can raise performance it can also take more problematic forms, from inflicting actual harm to making a comment to another person. These kinds of behaviors are likely to arise when the situation following the social comparison does not provide the opportunity to self-repair, such as another chance to compete in a race or retake a test (Johnson, 2012). However, when later opportunities to self-repair do exist, a more positive form of competitive motivation arises, whether that means running harder in a race or striving to earn a higher test score.

Comparing your behavior to that of other people might make you jealous, regretful or more motivated. Lapel stickers and online badges that proclaim “I voted” or “I gave blood” are common examples of leveraging social comparison to achieve positive social outcomes. [Image: CAVE CANEM, http://goo.gl/ifKSiE, CC BY 2.0, http://goo.gl/v4Y0Zv]
It is common advice in the business world for managers to “hire your replacement.” In other words, to hire people with as much talent as possible, even those who could do the job better than the manager. The SEM model suggests that managers may prefer sub-optimal candidates who aren’t likely to challenge their standing in the organization—where two people stand on the continuum from being complete strangers to being intimate friends—affects self-evaluations.

For example, in one study, Tesser and Smith (1980) asked people to play a verbal game in which they were given the opportunity to receive clues from a partner. These clues could be used to help them guess the correct word in a word game. Half the participants were told the game was related to intelligence whereas the other half were not. Additionally, half the participants were paired with a close friend but the other half played with a stranger. Results show that participants who were led to believe the task was self-relevant or having to do with intelligence provided more difficult clues when their partner was a friend versus a stranger—suggesting a competitive uptick associated with relationship closeness. However, when performance was implied to be irrelevant to the self, partners gave easier clues to friends than strangers.

SEM can predict which of our friends and which of our comparison dimensions are self-relevant (Tesser & Campbell, 2006; Zuckerman & Jost, 2001). For example, suppose playing chess is highly self-relevant for you. In this case you will naturally compare yourselves to other chess players. Now, suppose that your chess-playing friend consistently beats you. In fact, each time you play she beats you by a wider and wider margin. SEM would predict that one of two things will likely happen: (1) winning at chess will no longer be self-relevant to you, or (2) you will no longer be friends with this individual. In fact, if the first option occurs—you lose interest in competing—you will begin to bask in the glory of your chess playing friend as his or her performance approaches perfection.

These psychological processes have real world implications! They may determine who is hired in an organization or who is promoted at work. For example, suppose you are a faculty member of a university law school. Your work performance is appraised based on your teaching and on your academic publications. Although you do not have the most publications in your law school, you do have the most publications in prestigious journals.

Now, suppose that you are chairing a committee to hire a new faculty member. One candidate has even more top tier publications than you, while another candidate has the most publications in general of all the faculty members. How do you think social comparison might influence your choice of applicants? Research suggests that someone in your hypothetical shoes would likely favor the second candidate over the first candidate: people will actively champion the candidate who does not threaten their standing on a relevant dimension in an organization (Garcia, Song, & Tesser, 2010). In other words, the SEM forces are so powerful that people will essentially advocate for a candidate whom they feel is inferior!

**Individual Differences**

It is also worth mentioning that social comparison and its effects on self-evaluation will often depend on personality and individual differences. For example, people with mastery goals (Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen, &
Van de Vliert, 2007) may not interpret an upward comparison as a threat to the self but more as challenge, and a hopeful sign that one can achieve a certain level of performance. Another individual difference is whether one has a “fixed mindset” or “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2007). People with fixed mindsets think that their abilities and talents cannot change; thus, an upward comparison will likely threaten their self-evaluation and prompt them to experience negative consequences of social comparison, such as competitive behavior, envy, or unhappiness. People with growth mindsets, however, are likely to interpret an upward comparison as a challenge, and an opportunity to improve themselves.

Situational factors

Social comparison researchers are actively exploring situational factors that can likewise influence degrees of social comparison:

Number

As the number of comparison targets (i.e., the number of people with whom you can compare) increases, social comparison tends to decrease. For example, imagine you are running a race with competitors of similar ability as your own, and the top 20% will receive a prize. Do you think you would try harder if there were only 10 people in the race, or if there were 100? The findings on N-Effect (Garcia & Tor, 2009; Tor & Garcia, 2010) suggest the answer is 10. Even though the expected value of winning is the same in both cases, people will try harder when there are fewer people. In fact, findings suggest that as the number of SAT test-takers at a particular venue increases, the lower the average SAT score for that venue will be (Garcia & Tor, 2009). One of the mechanisms behind the N-Effect is social comparison. As the number of competitors increases, social comparison— one of the engines behind competitive motivation—becomes less important. Perhaps you have experienced this if you have had to give class presentations. As the number of presenters increases, you feel a decreasing amount of comparison pressure.
Local

It is natural to make comparisons between oneself and others on a variety of different standards and to compare oneself with a variety of different people. Comparisons to friends are among the most influential of all. [Image: Corrie M, http://goo.gl/FRbOjQ, CC BY-ND 2.0, http://goo.gl/FuDJ6c]

Research on the local dominance effect (Zell & Aliche, 2010) also provides insights about social comparison. People are more influenced by social comparison when the comparison is more localized rather than being broad and general. For example, if you wanted to evaluate your height by using social comparison, you could compare your height to a good friend, a group of friends, people in your workplace, or even the average height of people living in your city. Although any of these comparisons is hypothetically possible people generally rely on more local comparisons. They are more likely to compare with friends or co-workers than they are to industry or national averages. So, if you are among the tallest in your group of friends, it may very well give you a bigger boost to your self-esteem, even if you're still among the shortest individuals at the national level.

Proximity to a Standard

Research suggests that social comparison involves the proximity of a standard—such as the #1 ranking or other qualitative threshold. One consequence of this is an increase in competitive behavior. For example, in childhood games, if someone shouts, “First one to the tree is the coolest-person-in-the-world!” then the children who are nearest the tree will tug and pull at each other for the lead. However, if someone shouts, “Last one there is a rotten-egg!” then the children who are in last place will be the ones tugging and pulling each other to get ahead. In the proximity of a standard, social comparison concerns increase. We also see this in rankings. Rivals ranked #2 and #3, for instance, are less willing to maximize joint gains (in which they both benefit) if it means their opponent will benefit more, compared to rivals ranked #202 and #203 (Garcia, Tor, & Gonzalez, 2006; Garcia & Tor, 2007). These latter rivals are so far from the #1 rank (i.e., the standard) that it does not bother them if their opponent benefits more than them. Thus, social comparison concerns are only important in the proximity of a standard.

Social Category Lines

Social comparison can also happen between groups. This is especially the case when groups come from different social categories versus the same social category. For example, if students were deciding what kind of music to play at the high school prom, one option would be to simply flip a coin—say, heads for hip-hop, tails for pop. In this case, everyone represents the same social category—high school seniors—and social comparison isn't an issue. However, if all the boys wanted hip-hop and all the girls wanted pop flipping a coin is not such an easy solution as it privileges one social category over another (Garcia & Miller, 2007). For more on this, consider looking into the research literature about the difficulties of win-win scenarios between different social categories (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979).
Related Phenomena

Frog Pond Effect

One interesting phenomenon of social comparison is the Frog Pond Effect. As the name suggests, its premise can be illustrated using the simple analogy of a frog in a pond: as a frog, would you rather be in a small pond where you're a big frog, or a large pond where you're a small frog? According to Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke and Koller (2008), people in general had a better academic self-concept if they were a big frog in a small pond (e.g., the top student in their local high school) rather than a small frog in a large one (e.g., one of many good students at an Ivy League university). In a large study of students, they found that school-average ability can have a negative impact on the academic self-esteem of a student when the average ability is 1 standard deviation higher than normal (i.e., a big pond). In other words, average students have a higher academic self-concept when attending a below-average school (big fish in a small pond), and they have a lower academic self-concept when attending an above-average school (small fish in a big pond) (Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Parker, 1984).

The Dunning-Kruger Effect

Another related topic to social comparison is the Dunning-Kruger Effect. The Dunning-Kruger effect, as explained by Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger and Kruger (2003), addresses the fact that unskilled people often think they are on par or superior to their peers in tasks such as test-taking abilities. That is, they are overconfident. Basically, they fail to accurately compare themselves or their skills within their surroundings. For example, Dunning et al. (2003) asked students to disclose how well they thought they had done on an exam they’d just taken. The bottom 25% of students with the lowest test scores overestimated their performance by approximately 30%, thinking their performance was above the 50th percentile. This estimation problem doesn't only apply to poor performers, however. According to Dunning et al. (2003), top performers tend to underestimate their skills or percentile ranking in their surrounding context. Some explanations are provided by Dunning et al. (2003) for this effect on both the good and poor performers: The poor performers, compared to their more capable peers, lack specific logical abilities similar to the logic necessary to do some of the tasks/tests in these studies and, as such, cannot really distinguish which questions they are getting right or wrong. This is known as the double-curse explanation. However, the good performers do not have this particular logic problem and are actually quite good at estimating their raw scores. Ironically, the good performers usually overestimate how well the people around them are doing and therefore devaluate their own performance. As a result, most people tend to think they are above average in what they do, when in actuality not everyone can be above average.
The Dunning-Kruger Effect shows that the least experienced and least knowledgeable people are over-confident. These people don’t know what they don’t know and are more likely to overestimate their own abilities.

Conclusion

Social comparison is a natural psychological tendency and one that can exert a powerful influence on the way we feel and behave. Many people act as if social comparison is an ugly phenomenon and one to be avoided. This sentiment is at the heart of phrases like “keeping up with the Joneses” and “the rat race,” in which it is assumed that people are primarily motivated by a desire to beat others. In truth, social comparison has many positive aspects. Just think about it: how could you ever gauge your skills in chess without having anyone to compare yourself to? It would be nearly impossible to ever know just how good your chess skills are, or even what criteria determine “good” vs. “bad” chess skills. In addition, the engine of social comparison can also provide the push you need to rise to the occasion and increase your motivation, and therefore make progress toward your goals.

Take a Quiz:

An optional quiz is available for this chapter here: https://nobaproject.com/modules/social-comparison

Discussion Questions

1. On what do you compare yourself with others? Qualities such as attractiveness and intelligence? Skills such as school performance or athleticism? Do others also make these same types of comparisons or does each person make a unique set? Why do you think this is?
2. How can making comparisons to others help you?
3. One way to make comparisons is to compare yourself with your own past performance. Discuss a time you did this. Could this example be described as an “upward” or “downward” comparison? How did this type of comparison
affect you?

Vocabulary

**Counterfactual thinking**
Mentally comparing actual events with fantasies of what might have been possible in alternative scenarios.

**Downward comparison**
Making mental comparisons with people who are perceived to be inferior on the standard of comparison.

**Dunning-Kruger Effect**
The tendency for unskilled people to be overconfident in their ability and highly skilled people to underestimate their ability.

**Fixed mindset**
The belief that personal qualities such as intelligence are traits that cannot be developed. People with fixed mindsets often underperform compared to those with “growth mindsets”

**Frog Pond Effect**
The theory that a person's comparison group can affect their evaluations of themselves. Specifically, people have a tendency to have lower self-evaluations when comparing themselves to higher performing groups.

**Growth mindset**
The belief that personal qualities, such as intelligence, can be developed through effort and practice.

**Individual differences**
Psychological traits, abilities, aptitudes and tendencies that vary from person to person.

**Local dominance effect**
People are generally more influenced by social comparison when that comparison is personally relevant rather than broad and general.

**Mastery goals**
Goals that are focused primarily on learning, competence, and self-development. These are contrasted with “performance goals” that are focused on the quality of a person's performance.

**N-Effect**
The finding that increasing the number of competitors generally decreases one's motivation to compete.

**Personality**
A person's relatively stable patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior.

**Proximity**
The relative closeness or distance from a given comparison standard. The further from the standard a person is, the less important he or she considers the standard. When a person is closer to the standard he/she is more likely to be competitive.

**Self-enhancement effect**
The finding that people can boost their own self-evaluations by comparing themselves to others who rank lower on a particular comparison standard.
Self-esteem
The feeling of confidence in one's own abilities or worth.

Self-evaluation maintenance (SEM)
A model of social comparison that emphasizes one's closeness to the comparison target, the relative performance of that target person, and the relevance of the comparison behavior to one's self-concept.

Social category
Any group in which membership is defined by similarities between its members. Examples include religious, ethnic, and athletic groups.

Social comparison
The process by which people understand their own ability or condition by mentally comparing themselves to others.

Upward comparisons
Making mental comparisons to people who are perceived to be superior on the standard of comparison.

Outside Resources

Video: Downward Comparison
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=c3gGkiWSzvg%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Dunning-Kruger Effect
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=htEMitphv8w%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Social Comparison overview
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=HIRAQvP0ABg%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Social Media and Comparison
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=0mobWMwryKY%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Video: Upward Comparison
https://youtube.com/
watch?v=HlBKORVcyGk%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Web: Self-Compassion to counter the negative effects of social comparison
References


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4. The Psychology of Groups

From the Noba Project By Donelson R. Forsyth, University of Richmond

This module assumes that a thorough understanding of people requires a thorough understanding of groups. Each of us is an autonomous individual seeking our own objectives, yet we are also members of groups—groups that constrain us, guide us, and sustain us. Just as each of us influences the group and the people in the group, so, too, do groups change each one of us. Joining groups satisfies our need to belong, gain information and understanding through social comparison, define our sense of self and social identity, and achieve goals that might elude us if we worked alone. Groups are also practically significant, for much of the world's work is done by groups rather than by individuals. Success sometimes eludes our groups, but when group members learn to work together as a cohesive team their success becomes more certain. People also turn to groups when important decisions must be made, and this choice is justified as long as groups avoid such problems as group polarization and groupthink.

PDF Download

Key topics:

- Group decision making
- Groupthink
- Need to belong
- Self-esteem
- Social facilitation
- Social loafing
- Teamwork

Learning Objectives

- Review the evidence that suggests humans have a fundamental need to belong to groups.
- Compare the sociometer model of self-esteem to a more traditional view of self-esteem.
- Use theories of social facilitation to predict when a group will perform tasks slowly or quickly (e.g., students eating a meal as a group, workers on an assembly line, or a study group).
- Summarize the methods used by Latané, Williams, and Harkins to identify the relative impact of social loafing and coordination problems on group performance.
- Describe how groups change over time.
- Apply the theory of groupthink to a well-known decision-making group, such as the group of advisors responsible for planning the Bay of Pigs operation.
- List and discuss the factors that facilitate and impede group performance and decision making.
- Develop a list of recommendations that, if followed, would minimize the possibility of groupthink developing in a group.
The Psychology of Groups

Psychologists study groups because nearly all human activities—working, learning, worshiping, relaxing, playing, and even sleeping—occur in groups. The lone individual who is cut off from all groups is a rarity. Most of us live out our lives in groups, and these groups have a profound impact on our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Many psychologists focus their attention on single individuals, but social psychologists expand their analysis to include groups, organizations, communities, and even cultures.

This module examines the psychology of groups and group membership. It begins with a basic question: What is the psychological significance of groups? People are, undeniably, more often in groups rather than alone. What accounts for this marked gregariousness and what does it say about our psychological makeup? The module then reviews some of the key findings from studies of groups. Researchers have asked many questions about people and groups: Do people work as hard as they can when they are in groups? Are groups more cautious than individuals? Do groups make wiser decisions than single individuals? In many cases the answers are not what common sense and folk wisdom might suggest.

The Psychological Significance of Groups

Many people loudly proclaim their autonomy and independence. Like Ralph Waldo Emerson, they avow, “I must be myself. I will not hide my tastes or aversions . . . . I will seek my own” (1903/2004, p. 127). Even though people are capable of living separate and apart from others, they join with others because groups meet their psychological and social needs.
The Need to Belong

Across individuals, societies, and even eras, humans consistently seek inclusion over exclusion, membership over isolation, and acceptance over rejection. As Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995) conclude, humans have a need to belong: “a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and impactful interpersonal relationships” (p. 497). And most of us satisfy this need by joining groups. When surveyed, 87.3% of Americans reported that they lived with other people, including family members, partners, and roommates (Davis & Smith, 2007). The majority, ranging from 50% to 80%, reported regularly doing things in groups, such as attending a sports event together, visiting one another for the evening, sharing a meal together, or going out as a group to see a movie (Putnam, 2000).

People respond negatively when their need to belong is unfulfilled. People who are accepted members of a group tend to feel happier and more satisfied. But should they be rejected by a group, they feel unhappy, helpless, and depressed. Studies of ostracism—the deliberate exclusion from groups—indicate this experience is highly stressful and can lead to depression, confused thinking, and even aggression (Williams, 2007). When researchers used a functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner to track neural responses to exclusion, they found that people who were left out of a group activity displayed heightened cortical activity in two specific areas of the brain—the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insula. These areas of the brain are associated with the experience of physical pain sensations (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003). It hurts, quite literally, to be left out of a group.

Affiliation in Groups

Groups not only satisfy the need to belong, they also provide members with information, assistance, and social support. Leon Festinger’s theory of social comparison (1950, 1954) suggested that in many cases people join with others to evaluate the accuracy of their personal beliefs and attitudes. Stanley Schachter (1959) explored this process by putting individuals in ambiguous, stressful situations and asking them if they wished to wait alone or with others. He found that people affiliate in such situations—they seek the company of others.

Although any kind of companionship is appreciated, we prefer those who provide us with reassurance and support as well as accurate information. In some cases, we also prefer to join with others who are even worse off than we are. Imagine, for example, how you would respond when the teacher hands back the test and yours is marked 85%. Do you want to affiliate with a friend who got a 95% or a friend who got a 78%? To maintain a sense of self-worth, people seek out and compare themselves to the less fortunate. This process is known as downward social comparison.
Identity and Membership

Groups are not only founts of information during times of ambiguity, they also help us answer the existentially significant question, “Who am I?” People are defined not only by their traits, preferences, interests, likes, and dislikes, but also by their friendships, social roles, family connections, and group memberships. The self is not just a “me,” but also a “we.”

Even demographic qualities such as sex or age can influence us if we categorize ourselves based on these qualities. Social identity theory, for example, assumes that we don’t just classify other people into such social categories as man, woman, Anglo, elderly, or college student, but we also categorize ourselves. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), social identities are directed by our memberships in particular groups, or social categories. If we strongly identify with these categories, then we will ascribe the characteristics of the typical member of these groups to ourselves, and so stereotype ourselves. If, for example, we believe that college students are intellectual, then we will assume we, too, are intellectual if we identify with that group (Hogg, 2001).

Groups also provide a variety of means for maintaining and enhancing a sense of self-worth, as our assessment of the quality of groups we belong to influences our collective self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). If our self-esteem is shaken by a personal setback, we can focus on our group’s success and prestige. In addition, by comparing our group to other groups, we frequently discover that we are members of the better group, and so can take pride in our superiority. By denigrating other groups, we elevate both our personal and our collective self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989).

Mark Leary’s sociometer model goes so far as to suggest that “self-esteem is part of a sociometer that monitors peoples’ relational value in other people’s eyes” (2007, p. 328). He maintains self-esteem is not just an index of one’s sense of personal value, but also an indicator of acceptance into groups. Like a gauge that indicates how much fuel is left in the tank, a dip in self-esteem indicates exclusion from our group is likely. Disquieting feelings of self-worth, then, prompt us to search for and correct characteristics and qualities that put us at risk of social exclusion. Self-esteem is not just high self-regard, but the self-approbation that we feel when included in groups (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Evolutionary Advantages of Group Living

Groups may be humans’ most useful invention, for they provide us with the means to reach goals that would elude us if we remained alone. Individuals in groups can secure advantages and avoid disadvantages that would plague the lone individuals. In his theory of social integration, Moreland concludes that groups tend to form whenever “people become dependent on one another for the satisfaction of their needs” (1987, p. 104). The advantages of group life may be so great that humans are biologically prepared to seek membership and avoid isolation. From an evolutionary psychology perspective, because groups have increased humans’ overall fitness for countless generations, individuals who carried genes that promoted solitude-seeking were less likely to survive and procreate compared to those with genes that prompted them to join groups (Darwin, 1859/1963). This process of natural selection culminated in the creation of a modern human who seeks out membership in groups instinctively, for most of us are descendants of “joiners” rather than “loners.”
Motivation and Performance

Social Facilitation in Groups

Do people perform more effectively when alone or when part of a group? Norman Triplett (1898) examined this issue in one of the first empirical studies in psychology. While watching bicycle races, Triplett noticed that cyclists were faster when they competed against other racers than when they raced alone against the clock. To determine if the presence of others leads to the psychological stimulation that enhances performance, he arranged for 40 children to play a game that involved turning a small reel as quickly as possible (see Figure 1). When he measured how quickly they turned the reel, he confirmed that children performed slightly better when they played the game in pairs compared to when they played alone (see Stroebe, 2012; Strube, 2005).

Figure 1: The “competition machine” Triplett used to study the impact of competition on performance. Triplett’s study was one of the first laboratory studies conducted in the field of social psychology. Triplett, N. (1898)

Triplett succeeded in sparking interest in a phenomenon now known as social facilitation: the enhancement of an individual’s performance when that person works in the presence of other people. However, it remained for Robert Zajonc (1965) to specify when social facilitation does and does not occur. After reviewing prior research, Zajonc noted that the facilitating effects of an audience usually only occur when the task requires the person to perform dominant responses, i.e., ones that are well-learned or based on instinctive behaviors. If the task requires nondominant responses, i.e., novel, complicated, or untried behaviors that the organism has never performed before or has performed only infrequently, then the presence of others inhibits performance. Hence, students write poorer quality essays on complex philosophical questions when they labor in a group rather than alone (Allport, 1924), but they make fewer mistakes in solving simple, low-level multiplication problems with an audience or a coactor than when they work in isolation (Dashiell, 1930).

Social facilitation, then, depends on the task: other people facilitate performance when the task is so simple that it requires only dominant responses, but others interfere when the task requires nondominant responses. However, a number of psychological processes combine to influence when social facilitation, not social interference, occurs. Studies of the challenge-threat response and brain imaging, for example, confirm that we respond physiologically and neurologically to the presence of others (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, & Salomon, 1999). Other people also can trigger evaluation apprehension, particularly when we feel that our individual performance will be known to others,
and those others might judge it negatively (Bond, Atoum, & VanLeeuwen, 1996). The presence of other people can also cause perturbations in our capacity to concentrate on and process information (Harkins, 2006). Distractions due to the presence of other people have been shown to improve performance on certain tasks, such as the Stroop task, but undermine performance on more cognitively demanding tasks (Huguet, Galvaing, Monteil, & Dumas, 1999).

**Social Loafing**

Groups usually outperform individuals. A single student, working alone on a paper, will get less done in an hour than will four students working on a group project. One person playing a tug-of-war game against a group will lose. A crew of movers can pack up and transport your household belongings faster than you can by yourself. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light the work" (Littlepage, 1991; Steiner, 1972).

Groups, though, tend to be underachievers. Studies of social facilitation confirmed the positive motivational benefits of working with other people on well-practiced tasks in which each member's contribution to the collective enterprise can be identified and evaluated. But what happens when tasks require a truly collective effort? First, when people work together they must coordinate their individual activities and contributions to reach the maximum level of efficiency—but they rarely do (Diehl & Stroebe, 1987). Three people in a tug-of-war competition, for example, invariably pull and pause at slightly different times, so their efforts are uncoordinated. The result is **coordination loss: the three-person group is stronger than a single person, but not three times as strong**. Second, people just don't exert as much effort when working on a collective endeavor, nor do they expend as much cognitive effort trying to solve problems, as they do when working alone. They display **social loafing** (Latané, 1981).

Bibb Latané, Kip Williams, and Stephen Harkins (1979) examined both coordination losses and social loafing by arranging for students to cheer or clap either alone or in groups of varying sizes. The students cheered alone or in 2- or 6-person groups, or they were lead to believe they were in 2- or 6-person groups (those in the “pseudo-groups” wore blindfolds and headsets that played masking sound). As Figure 2 indicates, groups generated more noise than solitary subjects, but the productivity dropped as the groups became larger in size. In dyads, each subject worked at only 66% of capacity, and in 6-person groups at 36%. Productivity also dropped when subjects merely believed they were in groups. If subjects thought that one other person was shouting with them, they shouted 82% as intensely, and if they thought five other people were shouting, they reached only 74% of their capacity. These loses in productivity were not due to coordination problems; this decline in production could be attributed only to a reduction in effort—to social loafing (Latané et al., 1979, Experiment 2).
Teamwork

Social loafing is not a rare phenomenon. When sales personnel work in groups with shared goals, they tend to “take it easy” if another salesperson is nearby who can do their work (George, 1992). People who are trying to generate new, creative ideas in group brainstorming sessions usually put in less effort and are thus less productive than people who are generating new ideas individually (Paulus & Brown, 2007). Students assigned group projects often complain of inequity in the quality and quantity of each member’s contributions: Some people just don’t work as much as they should to help the group reach its learning goals (Neu, 2012). People carrying out all sorts of physical and mental tasks expend less effort when working in groups, and the larger the group, the more they loaf (Karau & Williams, 1993).

Groups can, however, overcome this impediment to performance through teamwork. A group may include many talented individuals, but they must learn how to pool their individual abilities and energies to maximize the team’s performance. Team goals must be set, work patterns structured, and a sense of group identity developed. Individual members must learn how to coordinate their actions, and any strains and stresses in interpersonal relations need to be identified and resolved (Salas, Rosen, Burke, & Goodwin, 2009).

Figure 2: Sound pressure per person as a function of group or pseudo group size. Latane, B. (1981)
Researchers have identified two key ingredients to effective teamwork: a shared mental representation of the task and group unity. Teams improve their performance over time as they develop a shared understanding of the team and the tasks they are attempting. Some semblance of this shared mental model is present nearly from its inception, but as the team practices, differences among the members in terms of their understanding of their situation and their team diminish as a consensus becomes implicitly accepted (Tindale, Stawiski, & Jacobs, 2008). Effective teams are also, in most cases, cohesive groups (Dion, 2000). Group cohesion is the integrity, solidarity, social integration, or unity of a group. In most cases, members of cohesive groups like each other and the group and they also are united in their pursuit of collective, group-level goals. Members tend to enjoy their groups more when they are cohesive, and cohesive groups usually outperform ones that lack cohesion. This cohesion–performance relationship, however, is a complex one. Meta-analytic studies suggest that cohesion improves teamwork among members, but that performance quality influences cohesion more than cohesion influences performance (Mullen & Copper, 1994; Mullen, Driskell, & Salas, 1998; see Figure 3). Cohesive groups also can be spectacularly unproductive if the group’s norms stress low productivity rather than high productivity (Seashore, 1954).
Figure 3: The relationship between group cohesion and performance over time. Groups that are cohesive do tend to perform well on tasks now (Time 1) and in the future (Time 2). Notice, though, that the relationship between Performance at Time 1 and Cohesiveness at Time 2 is greater \( r = .51 \) than the relationship between Cohesiveness at Time 1 and Performance at Time 2 \( (r = .25) \). These findings suggest that cohesion improves performance, but that a group that performs well is likely to also become more cohesive. Mullen, Driskell, & Salas (1998)

Group Development

In most cases groups do not become smooth-functioning teams overnight. As Bruce Tuckman's (1965) theory of group development suggests, groups usually pass through several stages of development as they change from a newly formed group into an effective team. As noted in Focus Topic 1, in the forming phase, the members become oriented toward one another. In the storming phase, the group members find themselves in conflict, and some solution is sought to improve the group environment. In the norming phase, standards for behavior and roles develop that regulate behavior. In the performing phase the group has reached a point where it can work as a unit to achieve desired goals, and the adjourning phase ends the sequence of development; the group disbands. Throughout these stages groups tend to oscillate between the task-oriented issues and the relationship issues, with members sometimes working hard but at other times strengthening their interpersonal bonds (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).
Focus Topic 1: Group Development Stages and Characteristics

**Stage 1 – “Forming”**. Members expose information about themselves in polite but tentative interactions. They explore the purposes of the group and gather information about each other’s interests, skills, and personal tendencies.

**Stage 2 – “Storming”**. Disagreements about procedures and purposes surface, so criticism and conflict increase. Much of the conflict stems from challenges between members who are seeking to increase their status and control in the group.

**Stage 3 – “Norming”**. Once the group agrees on its goals, procedures, and leadership, norms, roles, and social relationships develop that increase the group’s stability and cohesiveness.

**Stage 4 – “Performing”**. The group focuses its energies and attention on its goals, displaying higher rates of task-orientation, decision-making, and problem-solving.

**Stage 5 – “Adjourning”**. The group prepares to disband by completing its tasks, reduces levels of dependency among members, and dealing with any unresolved issues.

Sources based on Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman & Jensen (1977)

We also experience change as we pass through a group, for we don't become full-fledged members of a group in an instant. Instead, we gradually become a part of the group and remain in the group until we leave it. Richard Moreland and John Levine's (1982) model of group socialization describes this process, beginning with initial entry into the group and ending when the member exits it. For example, when you are thinking of joining a new group—a social club, a professional society, a fraternity or sorority, or a sports team—you investigate what the group has to offer, but the group also investigates you. During this investigation stage you are still an outsider: interested in joining the group, but not yet committed to it in any way. But once the group accepts you and you accept the group, socialization begins: you learn the group's norms and take on different responsibilities depending on your role. On a sports team, for example, you may initially hope to be a star who starts every game or plays a particular position, but the team may need something else from you. In time, though, the group will accept you as a full-fledged member and both sides in the process—you and the group itself—increase their commitment to one another. When that commitment wanes, however, your membership may come to an end as well.

**Making Decisions in Groups**

Groups are particularly useful when it comes to making a decision, for groups can draw on more resources than can a lone individual. A single individual may know a great deal about a problem and possible solutions, but his or her information is far surpassed by the combined knowledge of a group. Groups not only generate more ideas and possible solutions by discussing the problem, but they can also more objectively evaluate the options that they generate during discussion. Before accepting a solution, a group may require that a certain number of people favor it, or that it meets
some other standard of acceptability. People generally feel that a group's decision will be superior to an individual's decision.

Groups, however, do not always make good decisions. For example, juries sometimes render verdicts that run counter to the evidence presented. Community groups take radical stances on issues before thinking through all the ramifications. Military strategists concoct plans that seem, in retrospect, ill-conceived and short-sighted. Why do groups sometimes make poor decisions?

**Group Polarization**

Let's say you are part of a group assigned to make a presentation. One of the group members suggests showing a short video that, although amusing, includes some provocative images. Even though initially you think the clip is inappropriate, you begin to change your mind as the group discusses the idea. The group decides, eventually, to throw caution to the wind and show the clip—and your instructor is horrified by your choice.

This hypothetical example is consistent with studies of groups making decisions that involve risk. Common sense notions suggest that groups exert a moderating, subduing effect on their members. However, when researchers looked at groups closely, they discovered many groups shift toward more extreme decisions rather than less extreme decisions after group interaction. Discussion, it turns out, doesn't moderate people's judgments after all. Instead, it leads to group polarization: judgments made after group discussion will be more extreme in the same direction as the average of individual judgments made prior to discussion (Myers & Lamm, 1976). If a majority of members feel that taking risks is more acceptable than exercising caution, then the group will become riskier after a discussion. For example, in France, where people generally like their government but dislike Americans, group discussion improved their attitude toward their government but exacerbated their negative opinions of Americans (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969). Similarly, prejudiced people who discussed racial issues with other prejudiced individuals became even more negative, but those who were relatively unprejudiced exhibited even more acceptance of diversity when in groups (Myers & Bishop, 1970).

**Common Knowledge Effect**

One of the advantages of making decisions in groups is the group's greater access to information. When seeking a solution to a problem, group members can put their ideas on the table and share their knowledge and judgments with each other through discussions. But all too often groups spend much of their discussion time examining common knowledge—information that two or more group members know in common—rather than unshared information. This common knowledge effect or shared information bias will result in a bad outcome if something known by only one or two group members is very important.

Researchers have studied this bias using the hidden profile task. On such tasks, information known to many of the group members suggests that one alternative, say Option A, is best. However, Option B is definitely the better choice, but all the facts that support Option B are only known to individual groups members—they are not common knowledge in the group. As a result, the group will likely spend most of its time reviewing the factors that favor Option A, and never discover any of its drawbacks. In consequence, groups often perform poorly when working on problems with nonobvious solutions that can only be identified by extensive information sharing (Stasser & Titus, 1987).
Groupthink

Groups sometimes make spectacularly bad decisions. In 1961, a special advisory committee to President John F. Kennedy planned and implemented a covert invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs that ended in total disaster. In 1986, NASA carefully, and incorrectly, decided to launch the Challenger space shuttle in temperatures that were too cold.

Irving Janis (1982), intrigued by these kinds of blundering groups, carried out a number of case studies of such groups: the military experts that planned the defense of Pearl Harbor; Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs planning group; the presidential team that escalated the war in Vietnam. Each group, he concluded, fell prey to a distorted style of thinking that rendered the group members incapable of making a rational decision. Janis labeled this syndrome groupthink: “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (p. 9).

Janis identified both the telltale symptoms that signal the group is experiencing groupthink and the interpersonal factors that combine to cause groupthink. These symptoms include overestimating the group’s skills and wisdom, biased perceptions and evaluations of other groups and people who are outside of the group, strong conformity pressures within the group, and poor decision-making methods.

Janis also singled out four group-level factors that combine to cause groupthink: cohesion, isolation, biased leadership, and decisional stress.

- **Cohesion**: Groupthink only occurs in cohesive groups. Such groups have many advantages over groups that lack unity. People enjoy their membership much more in cohesive groups, they are less likely to abandon the group, and they work harder in pursuit of the group’s goals. But extreme cohesiveness can be dangerous. When cohesiveness intensifies, members become more likely to accept the goals, decisions, and norms of the group without reservation. Conformity pressures also rise as members become reluctant to say or do anything that goes against the grain of the group, and the number of internal disagreements—necessary for good decision making—decreases.

- **Isolation**: Groupthink groups too often work behind closed doors, keeping out of the limelight. They isolate themselves from outsiders and refuse to modify their beliefs to bring them into line with society’s beliefs. They avoid leaks by maintaining strict confidentiality and working only with people who are members of their group.

- **Biased leadership**: A biased leader who exerts too much authority over group members can increase conformity pressures and railroad decisions. In groupthink groups, the leader determines the agenda for each meeting, sets limits on discussion, and can even decide who will be heard.

- **Decisional stress**: Groupthink becomes more likely when the group is stressed, particularly by time pressures. When groups are stressed they minimize their discomfort by quickly choosing a plan of action with little argument or dissension. Then, through collective discussion, the group members can rationalize their choice by exaggerating the positive consequences, minimizing the possibility of negative outcomes, concentrating on minor
Even groups that like one another and work well together in most situations can be victims of groupthink or the common knowledge effect. But knowing that these pitfalls exist is the first step to overcoming them. [Image: CC0 Public Domain, https://goo.gl/m25gce]

You and Your Groups

Most of us belong to at least one group that must make decisions from time to time: a community group that needs to choose a fund-raising project; a union or employee group that must ratify a new contract; a family that must discuss your college plans; or the staff of a high school discussing ways to deal with the potential for violence during football games. Could these kinds of groups experience groupthink? Yes they could, if the symptoms of groupthink discussed above are present, combined with other contributing causal factors, such as cohesiveness, isolation, biased leadership, and stress. To avoid polarization, the common knowledge effect, and groupthink, groups should strive to emphasize open inquiry of all sides of the issue while admitting the possibility of failure. The leaders of the group can also do much to limit groupthink by requiring full discussion of pros and cons, appointing devil's advocates, and breaking the group up into small discussion groups.

If these precautions are taken, your group has a much greater chance of making an informed, rational decision. Furthermore, although your group should review its goals, teamwork, and decision-making strategies, the human side of groups—the strong friendships and bonds that make group activity so enjoyable—shouldn’t be overlooked. Groups have instrumental, practical value, but also emotional, psychological value. In groups we find others who appreciate and value us. In groups we gain the support we need in difficult times, but also have the opportunity to influence others. In groups we find evidence of our self-worth, and secure ourselves from the threat of loneliness and despair. For most of us, groups are the secret source of well-being.
Take a Quiz:

An optional quiz is available for this unit here: https://nobaproject.com/modules/the-psychology-of-groups

Discussion Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of sociality? Why do people often join groups?
2. Is self-esteem shaped by your personality qualities or by the value and qualities of groups to which you belong?
3. In what ways does membership in a group change a person's self-concept and social identity?
4. What steps would you take if you were to base a self-esteem enrichment program in schools on the sociometer model of self-worth?
5. If you were a college professor, what would you do to increase the success of in-class learning teams?
6. What are the key ingredients to transforming a working group into a true team?
7. Have you ever been part of a group that made a poor decision and, if so, were any of the symptoms of groupthink present in your group?

Vocabulary

**Collective self-esteem**
Feelings of self-worth that are based on evaluation of relationships with others and membership in social groups.

**Common knowledge effect AKA Shared information bias**
The tendency for groups to spend more time discussing information that all members know (shared information) and less time examining information that only a few members know (unshared).

**Group cohesion**
The solidarity or unity of a group resulting from the development of strong and mutual interpersonal bonds among members and group-level forces that unify the group, such as shared commitment to group goals.

**Group polarization**
The tendency for members of a deliberating group to move to a more extreme position, with the direction of the shift determined by the majority or average of the members' predeliberation preferences.

**Groupthink**
A set of negative group-level processes, including illusions of invulnerability, self-censorship, and pressures to conform, that occur when highly cohesive groups seek concurrence when making a decision.

**Ostracism**
Excluding one or more individuals from a group by reducing or eliminating contact with the person, usually by ignoring, shunning, or explicitly banishing them.

**Shared mental model**
Knowledge, expectations, conceptualizations, and other cognitive representations that members of a group have in common pertaining to the group and its members, tasks, procedures, and resources.
Social comparison
The process of contrasting one's personal qualities and outcomes, including beliefs, attitudes, values, abilities, accomplishments, and experiences, to those of other people.

Social facilitation
Improvement in task performance that occurs when people work in the presence of other people.

Social identity theory
A theoretical analysis of group processes and intergroup relations that assumes groups influence their members' self-concepts and self-esteem, particularly when individuals categorize themselves as group members and identify with the group.

Social loafing
The reduction of individual effort exerted when people work in groups compared with when they work alone.

Sociometer model
A conceptual analysis of self-evaluation processes that theorizes self-esteem functions to psychologically monitor of one's degree of inclusion and exclusion in social groups.

Teamwork
The process by which members of the team combine their knowledge, skills, abilities, and other resources through a coordinated series of actions to produce an outcome.

Outside Resources

Audio: This American Life. Episode 109 deals with the motivation and excitement of joining with others at summer camp.
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/109/notes-on-camp

Audio: This American Life. Episode 158 examines how people act when they are immersed in a large crowd.
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/158/mob-mentality

Audio: This American Life. Episode 61 deals with fiascos, many of which are perpetrated by groups.
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/61/fiasco

Audio: This American Life. Episode 74 examines how individuals act at conventions, when they join with hundreds or thousands of other people who are similar in terms of their avocations or employment.
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/74/conventions


Forsyth, D.R. (n.d.) Group Dynamics: Instructional Resources.

Journal Article: The Dynamogenic Factors in Pacemaking and Competition presents Norman Triplett's original paper on what would eventually be known as social facilitation.
http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Triplett/
Resources for the Teaching of Social Psychology.
http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/group.htm

Social Psychology Network Student Activities
http://www.socialpsychology.org/teaching.htm#student-activities

Society for Social and Personality Psychology
http://www.spsp.org

Tablante, C. B., & Fiske, S. T. (2015). Teaching social class. Teaching of Psychology, 42, 184–190. doi:10.1177/0098628315573148 The abstract to the article can be found at the following link, however your library will likely provide you access to the full text version.
http://top.sagepub.com/content/42/2/184.abstract

Video: Flash mobs illustrate the capacity of groups to organize quickly and complete complex tasks. One well-known example of a pseudo-flash mob is the rendition of “Do Re Mi” from the Sound of Music in the Central Station of Antwerp in 2009.
https://youtube.com/watch?v=7EYAUazL9k%3Fcolor%3Dred%26mode%26branding%3D%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A

Web: Group Development – This is a website developed by James Atherton that provides detailed information about group development, with application to the lifecycle of a typical college course.
http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/group_development.htm

Web: Group Dynamics- A general repository of links, short articles, and discussions examining groups and group processes, including such topics as crowd behavior, leadership, group structure, and influence.
http://donforsythgroups.wordpress.com/

Web: Stanford Crowd Project – This is a rich resource of information about all things related to crowds, with a particular emphasis on crowds and collective behavior in literature and the arts.

Working Paper: Law of Group Polarization, by Cass Sunstein, is a wide-ranging application of the concept of polarization to a variety of legal and political decisions.

References


Authors

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How to cite this Noba module using APA Style


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5. Shared Information Bias

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Sharing information with other group members is associated with group member perceptions of competence, knowledge, and credibility (Wittenbaum & Park, 2001). According to Broderick, Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, and Schulz–Hardt (2007), information known to only a single member of a group prior to group discussion will be mentioned less often and evaluated less favorably compared with information known to multiple group members prior to a group discussion. This phenomenon describes shared information bias (Baker, 2010). Shared information bias (also known as the collective information sampling bias) is thus a tendency for group members to spend more time and energy discussing information that multiple members are already familiar with (i.e., shared information). Researchers predict poor decision-making can arise when the group does not have access to unshared information for making well-informed decisions. The result of inaccessible unshared information is called hidden profiles. Hidden profiles describe group decision tasks in which different (but correct) possible solutions exist, but no group member detects it based on his or her individual information prior to the discussion (Stasser, 1988).

Causes

Although discussing unshared information may be enlightening, groups are often motivated to discuss shared information in order to reach group consensus on some course of action. According to Postmes, Spears, and Cihangır (2001), when group members are motivated by a desire to reach closure (e.g., a desire imposed by time constraints), their bias for discussing shared information is stronger. However, if members are concerned with making the best decision possible, this bias becomes less salient. Stewart and Stasser (1998) have asserted that the shared information bias is strongest for group members working on ambiguous, judgment-oriented tasks because their goal is to reach consensual agreement than to distinguish a correct solution. The shared information bias may also develop during group discussion in response to the interpersonal and psychological needs of individual group members. For example, some group members tend to seek group support for their own personal opinions. This psychological motivation to garner collective acceptance of one’s own initial views has been linked to group preferences for shared information during decision-making activities (Greitemeyer & Schulz–Hardt, 2003; Henningsen & Henningsen, 2003). Lastly, the nature of the discussion between group members reflects whether biases for shared information will surface. According to Wittenbaum et al. (2004), members are motivated to establish and maintain reputations, to secure tighter bonds, and to compete for success against other group members. As a result, individuals tend to be selective when disclosing information to other group members.

Outcomes

Wittenbaum, Hubbell, and Zuckerman (1999) examined mutual enhancement during various discussions about job candidates (i.e., interactions between two people). Participant dyads were assigned to one of two conditions. Before meeting to discuss candidate profiles, researchers had dyads in the first condition look at same information about candidates, while the second condition had dyads receive different information. Participants in condition one evaluated both their partner and self as more component and credible.
Avoidance strategies

Several strategies can be employed to reduce group focus on discussing shared information:

• Make effort to spend more time actively discussing collective decisions. Given that group members tend to discuss shared information first, longer meetings increase likelihood of reviewing unshared information as well.
• Make effort to avoid generalized discussions by increasing the diversity of opinions within the group (Smith, 2008).
• Introduce the discussion of a new topic to avoid returning to previously discussed items among members (Reimer, Reimer, & Hinsz, 2010).
• Avoid time pressure or time constraints that motivate group members to discuss less information (Kelly & Karau, 1999; Bowman & Wittenbaum, 2012).
• Clarify to group members when certain individuals have relevant expertise (Stewart & Stasser, 1995).
• Include more group members who have task-relevant experience (Wittenbaum, 1998).
• Technology (e.g., group decision support systems, GDSS) can also offer group members a way to catalog information that must be discussed. These technological tools (e.g., search engines, databases, computer programs that estimate risk) help facilitate communication between members while structuralizing the group's decision-making process (Hollingshead, 2001).

References


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6. Teams as Systems

Content in this chapter comes from the Open University at Open.edu. Source 1 and Source 2

Creating successful teams: A holistic view

This section focuses on an open systems' approach to teamwork – a helpful approach which encourages teams to consider the context in which they work. The approach considers team processes, which are divided into three parts: inputs, throughputs and outputs. These highlight the different issues and activities a team and leaders needs to engage with or oversee during the life of a team. As you read, think about the processes the team went through (or will go through).

Inputs, throughputs and outputs

The systems perspective asks us to think of teams as part of the wider context of an organization or the community. Considering a systems perspective ensures that team-leaders can find the resources to help the team function successfully. A systems perspective asks: what needs to be controlled, monitored and/or influenced within and outside the team? At the same time, leaders needs to consider the team in terms of its task phases and processes, from start to finish. This allows leaders put a particular team-related issue in context in order to understand it better.

A leader's task is to understand, plan and monitor all these different processes. This seemingly complex and unwieldy task is easier to understand and manage when broken down into its component parts. The open systems model of team work (Schermerhorn et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 1997) can help to explain and characterize effective team-work processes.

The open systems approach to team working

Schermerhorn and colleagues suggest that teamwork can be considered as a three-stage sequence. Teams are viewed as systems which take in resources such as time, people, skills, problems (inputs) and through transformational processes (throughputs) such as decision-making and different behaviors and activities, transform them into outputs, such as work, solutions and satisfactions (Ingram et al., 1997). Thus, team performance is the collective competencies, knowledge, and actions of team members (DiSanza & Legge, 2017). This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Inputs** are factors which are controlled and influenced by management. They include 'climate', the atmosphere under which the team works, and 'group configuration', how the team is put together, who is selected to work in it and why. Management will also influence how a team should work by making sure at the outset that the team strategy is in line with the vision and strategic direction of...
the organization and that it uses the organization’s preferred work practices; for example, face-to-face or virtual working.

Throughputs refer to the activities and tasks that help to transform inputs into outputs. They may have the greatest influence on effective teamwork as they include team processes such as developing and maintaining cohesiveness, and communication. They also involve task activities which get the work done and maintenance activities which support the development and smooth functioning of the team.

Outputs are those (successful) outcomes which satisfy organizational or personal goals or other predetermined criteria. The success of outputs may be assessed by a number of stakeholders, including the organization itself and team members, and by a range of other stakeholders. Team outputs include the performance of team tasks and individual outputs (such as professional development).

How can this framework be applied in a way which highlights how to manage or lead a team and its task? Imagine you have been asked to put together a team to produce the company’s internal newsletter. What inputs, throughputs and outputs would you need? What questions would you need to ask yourself about different aspects of the process? We now consider what you might need to think about for the newsletter example. Some of the questions could be adapted and applied to other situations as well.

Inputs

Inputs are often controlled or influenced by management. This may be the direct manager of the group or team or the result of senior management decisions and strategies. This means in practice that the way a team is put together and will function is influenced by the organization’s values, vision and strategy, and its practices and procedures.

Two main factors to consider at this stage are communication climate and group configuration. Communication climate refers to the communicative norms for a workplace, usually this focuses on how willing or unwilling people are to raise issues or concerns and to speak freely. Group configuration refers to the roles adopted by group members. Some groups have strong hierarchy (the leader makes all decisions) other groups distribute decisions among all members (i.e., democratic or egalitarian). The communication climate and configuration of members determines how inputs can be leveraged.

Some input-related questions for you to consider at this stage are given in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Input-related questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much support is there for this newsletter among senior management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who might need to be influenced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What objectives will it fulfill?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resources will be provided for it? What others might be needed? Where could they come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will individuals working on this be rewarded or recognized?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What might they learn? What skills could they hope to develop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people will be needed to perform this task?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What technical skills are needed (e.g. desktop publishing)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughputs

Some common throughputs include:

- **Team processes.** A sense of unity is created through sharing clear goals which are understood and accepted by the members.
- **Cohesiveness.** This involves encouraging feelings of belonging, cooperation, openness and commitment to the team.
- **Communication.** This involves being clear, accurate, open and honest.
- **Decision-making.** This involves making sure that established procedures are in place, that everybody is clear about leadership and an environment of trust is being created.
- **Task and maintenance activities.** These include activities that ensure that the task is produced effectively, such as planning, agreeing on procedures and controls. They also include activities that minimise threats to the process, such as monitoring and reviewing internal processes and dealing constructively with conflict.

In Table 2, you’ll find out more on “Throughputs”:

Table 2: Throughputs

Some common throughputs include:

- **Team processes.** A sense of unity is created through sharing clear goals which are understood and accepted by the members.
- **Cohesiveness.** This involves encouraging feelings of belonging, cooperation, openness and commitment to the team.
- **Communication.** This involves being clear, accurate, open and honest.
- **Decision-making.** This involves making sure that established procedures are in place, that everybody is clear about leadership and an environment of trust is being created.
- **Task and maintenance activities.** These include activities that ensure that the task is produced effectively, such as planning, agreeing on procedures and controls. They also include activities that minimise threats to the process, such as monitoring and reviewing internal processes and dealing constructively with conflict.
In the case of the newsletter project, you may need to think about ways of setting up the project. Would it be possible to have a team away day? If so, what would the themes of the day be? Perhaps you could work backwards from the finished product. How do team members envisage the newsletter in terms of aim, goals, content and look? Can they come up with an appropriate design and name for the newsletter? Then, what needs to be done in order for this to be produced? Some ground rules for working together may also need to be set at an early stage. Some throughput-related questions are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Throughput-related questions

- What can you do to build a sense of belonging among the team members?
- How will the group communicate? (Face-to-face, email, group software?)
- Do any ground rules need setting up? How can this be done?
- What established procedures for decision-making are there?
- Will there be a team leader? How will the person be chosen?
- What tasks need to be performed to complete the project?
- What maintenance behaviors does the group need to exhibit to get the job done and to benefit and develop from the experience?
- Who will be responsible for ensuring that the different tasks and maintenance activities are performed?
- Are there structures and systems in place to review processes?

Outputs

Outcomes can be examined in terms of task performance, individual performance and other (incidental) outcomes.

**Task performance.** This may be judged on a number of criteria, such as quality of the formal outputs or objectives. In this case a product (the newsletter) and the time taken to perform the task are the criteria.

**Individual outputs.** These may include personal satisfaction and personal development and learning.

**Other outcomes.** These include transferable skills to apply in future to other teamwork. They include, for example, experience of effective teamwork and task-specific skills.

In general, it is always appropriate to evaluate outcomes. In this case you may need to think about:

- Evaluating the newsletter itself. Was it well-received?
- Evaluating individual outcomes. Have members developed transferable skills that they can take to new projects?
- Evaluating other outcomes. Has the experience enhanced team members’ ability to work in a team?

Some output-related questions are set out in Table 4.
### Table 4 Output-related questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the team completed the task it was given?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has it kept to cost and to time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has the team learned from this experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the team now be broken up or could it go on to another activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have individuals learned from the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have members experienced an effective team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have any learning and development needs been identified? How can they be addressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have members developed transferable teamworking and other skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can these skills be used in the organization?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open systems model of teamwork shows us how effective teamwork can offer benefits to organization and staff. However, it also shows us that these benefits do not occur without effort and planning. Leaders need to ensure that the right team is put together to perform a given task and that it is given appropriate tasks. They also need to secure the freedom, resources and support for the team to undertake the task. The model alerts teams and leaders to both the micro and the macro issues they will need to be aware of in managing effective teams.

### Group size

Another significant feature of a work group is its size. To be effective it should be neither too large nor too small. As membership increases there is a trade-off between increased collective expertise and decreased involvement and satisfaction of individual members. A very small group may not have the range of skills it requires to function well. The optimum size depends partly on the group's purpose. A group for information sharing or decision making may need to be larger than one for problem solving.

A simple calculation can indicate how quickly the number of two-way interactions in a group increases with increasing size. In a group of N people (where N stands for a number) each of the N individuals relates with N × 1 others, so there are \( N \times (N - 1) / 2 \) possible interactions.

In many organizations, there is a tendency to include representatives from every conceivable grouping on all committees in the belief that this enhances participation and effectiveness. There is also the view that putting a representative of every possible related department into a given group helps smooth information flow and project progress. In practice, communication is usually reduced in larger groups. As the group size grows, members feel less involved in the process, alienation tends to increase and commitment to the project tends to decrease. The numbers most commonly quoted for effective group size in a face-to-face team are between 5 and 10, so reducing the number of interactions and lessening the risk of conflict.

There is a nice demonstration that the 'between 5 and 10' rule is due to communication limitations. If we devise special procedures to manage the interpersonal exchanges (as in some computer-based brainstorming systems, where the computers handle all the gathering and feeding back of ideas) the advantages of the small group disappears: the larger the group, the more ideas are generated.
However, in the normal face-to-face mode, if there are more than about 12 members in our team we are likely to encounter group-size problems. If the numbers cannot be reduced we might consider restructuring the team into sub-groups and delegating responsibility for achieving some of the team's objectives. We may find that if we don't do this deliberately it will happen anyway. For instance, members who like each other or share common interests may spontaneously form sub-groups.

Unfortunately, the breakdown of large groups into sub-groups and cliques may not help a team achieve its goals. One device for keeping large numbers of people informed about a project is for a small group to manage the task and for it to invite relevant people to attend particular meetings. Alternatively, the small group can arrange to give information seminars to larger groups of colleagues. So, for the purposes of achieving team goals it is better that the process of restructuring big groups into smaller groups is managed consciously and carefully.

Managing group membership

The range of people that makes up the membership of a team, and the relationships they have with each other, have great influence on the team's effectiveness. The members should all be able to contribute their skills and expertise to the team's goals to make the best use of the resources. If you are ever in the position of being able to select your own team, you will need to identify your objectives and the methods for achieving your goals. From this will come the competences – the knowledge, understanding, skills and personal qualities – which you need in your team members.

The least-sized group principle contends that the ideal group size is one which incorporates a wide variety of views and opinions but contains as few members as possible. Restated, a group should be as small as possible while still incorporating as wide a range of perspectives as possible. It is important to appraise as systematically as possible the relationship between team functions and required competences in order to identify gaps and begin to allocate responsibilities, organize training and so on. Figure 2 provides a useful way of weighing up the mixture of ‘task’ and ‘people’ functions (or ‘faces’) of a team.

Overview

Faces 1 and 2 are external to the team and concern:

- adapting to the environment and using organizational resources effectively in order to satisfy the requirements of the team's sponsor.
- relating effectively with people outside the team in order to meet the needs of clients or customers, whether internal or external to the organization.

Faces 3 and 4 are internal to the team and concern:

- using systems and procedures appropriately to carry out goal-oriented tasks.
- working in a way which makes people feel part of a team.

Each face implies different competences.
We may find that when we are setting up a team we have to guess a little about the competences that are required. We may also find that as the team develops and gets on with its work, there are changes in everyone’s perception of the skills and knowledge needed. It is therefore important to keep an eye on changes that affect the expertise needed by the team and actively recruit new members if necessary. It is frequently the case that team members have other work commitments outside the team. The implications of this should be taken into account when recruiting team members and allocating tasks and responsibilities to them. Team loyalties and commitments need to be balanced with other loyalties and commitments. Often we will have limited or no choice about who is recruited to the team. We may find that we just have to make do with the situation and struggle to be effective despite limitations in the competence base.

As well as competencies there are other factors that can influence the working of a team. The balance of men and women and people from different nationalities or cultural backgrounds all play a part. Differences in personality can also have a significant effect. Achieving the best mix in a team invariably involves working on the tensions that surround issues of uniformity and diversity. The pushes and pulls in different directions need to be managed. The dismantling of many of the restrictions in the European labour market supports moves towards recruitment practices which seek team members with proven capabilities to work in other countries. Legislation and social changes make it easier for organizations to develop and train their staff to appreciate ethnic and national differences in values, style, attitudes and performance standards. Nevertheless, there are countervailing tendencies, internally and externally.

Developing openness and trust, for example, can often seem easier in the first instance on the basis of a high degree of homogeneity; strengthening diversity can seem threatening in an established team.

**Functional and team roles**

When individuals are being selected for membership of a team, the choice is usually made on the basis of task-related
issues, such as their prior skills, knowledge, and experience. However, team effectiveness is equally dependent on the personal qualities and attributes of individual team members. It is just as important to select for these as well.

When we work with other people in a group or team we each bring two types of role to that relationship. The first, and more obvious, is our **functional role**, which relies on the skills and experiences that we bring to the project or problem in hand. The second, and often overlooked, contribution is our **team role**, which tends to be based on our personality or preferred style of action. To a large extent, our team role can be said to determine how we apply the skills and experiences that comprise our functional role.

Belbin (1981, 1993) researched the functional role/team role distinction and its implications for teams. He found that, while there are a few people who do not function well in any team role, most of us have perhaps two or three roles that we feel comfortable in (our so-called 'preferred roles') and others in which we feel less at ease (our so-called 'non-preferred roles'). In fact, Belbin and his associates identified **nine** such team roles. Some of the non-preferred roles are ones we can cope with if we have to. However, there are also likely to be others in which we are both uncomfortable and ineffective.

Belbin's nine team roles are listed in Table 1. It is worth noting that all nine are equally important to team effectiveness, provided that they are used by the team at the right times and in an appropriate manner.

When a team first addresses a problem or kicks off a project, the basic requirement is usually for innovative ideas (the need for a 'plant'), closely followed by the requirement to appreciate how these ideas can be turned into practical actions and manageable tasks (the 'implementer'). These steps stand most chance of being achieved if the team has a good chairperson (the 'coordinator') who ensures that the appropriate team members contribute at the right times. Drive and impetus are brought to the team's activities by the energetic 'shaper'. When delicate negotiations with contacts outside the team are called for, it is the personality of the 'resource investigator' that comes into its own. To stop the team becoming over-enthusiastic and missing key points, the 'monitor/evaluator' must be allowed to play a part. Any sources of friction or misunderstanding within the team are diffused by the 'teamworker', whilst the 'specialist' is used for skills or knowledge that are in short supply and not used regularly. The 'completer/finisher' ensures that proper attention is paid to the details of any solutions or follow-up actions.

It is essential that team members share details of their team roles with their colleagues if the team is to gain the full benefit from its range of roles; the team can then see if any of the nine team roles are missing. If this is the case, those team members whose non-preferred roles match the missing roles need to make the effort required to fill the gap. If not it may be necessary to bring in additional team members. Clearly, this sharing calls for a degree of openness and trust, which should exist in a well-organised, well-led team. Unfortunately, in teams that have not yet developed mutual trust and openness, some people who may be quite open about the details of their functional roles tend to be somewhat coy about sharing personality details. A competent leader will handle this situation in a sensitive manner.

**Table 1:**

**Belbin team roles**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team role</th>
<th>Team strengths</th>
<th>Allowable weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>Creative, imaginative, unorthodox</td>
<td>Weak in communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An innovator</td>
<td>Easily upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team's source of original ideas</td>
<td>Can dwell on 'interesting ideas'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementer</td>
<td>Turns ideas into practical actions</td>
<td>Somewhat inflexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turns decisions into manageable tasks</td>
<td>Does not like 'airy-fairy' ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brings method to the team's activities</td>
<td>Upset by frequent changes of plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completer-finisher</td>
<td>Painstaking and conscientious</td>
<td>Anxious introvert; inclined to worry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sees tasks through to completion</td>
<td>Reluctant to delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivers on time</td>
<td>Dislikes casual approach by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor-evaluator</td>
<td>Offers dispassionate, critical analysis</td>
<td>Lacks drive and inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a strategic, discerning view</td>
<td>Lacks warmth and imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judges accurately; sees all options</td>
<td>Can lower morale by being a damper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource investigator</td>
<td>Diplomat with many contacts</td>
<td>Loses interest as enthusiasm wanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improviser; explores opportunities</td>
<td>Jumps from one task to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enthusiastic and communicative</td>
<td>Thrives on pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaper</td>
<td>Task minded; brings drive to the team</td>
<td>Easily provoked or frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes things happen</td>
<td>Impulsive and impatient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dynamic, outgoing and challenging</td>
<td>Intolerant of wooliness or vagueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamworker</td>
<td>Promotes team harmony; diffuses friction</td>
<td>Indecisive in crunch situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listens; builds on the ideas of others</td>
<td>May avoid confrontation situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitive but gently assertive</td>
<td>May avoid commitment at decision time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Clarifies goals; good chairperson</td>
<td>Can be seen as manipulative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes decision making</td>
<td>Inclined to let others do the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good communicator; social leader</td>
<td>May take credit for the team's work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Provides rare skills and knowledge</td>
<td>Contributes only on a narrow front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-minded and focused</td>
<td>Communication skills are often weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-starting and dedicated</td>
<td>Often cannot see the 'big picture'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders sometimes try to rationalize having teams that are unbalanced in a team-role sense by claiming that they have been assigned a group of people as their team and they must live with it. In most of today's workplaces there is a steady and regular movement of staff in and out of management groups and departments. When selecting or accepting new people into their groups or departments, leaders with an understanding of team-role concepts will look for team-role strengths in addition to functional-role strengths.

Each team role brings valuable strengths to the overall team (team strength), but each also has a downside. Belbin has coined the phrase 'an allowable weakness' for what is the converse of a team strength. The tendency is for a leader to try to correct perceived weaknesses in an employee. But by doing this with allowable weaknesses we face the possibility of not only failing to eradicate what is after all a natural weakness, but also risking undermining the strength that goes with it. This is not to suggest that weaknesses should not be addressed. The point is that any attempts at improvement should be kept in balance and we should be prepared to manage and work around the weaknesses of our team colleagues and ourselves. Many people put on an act in an attempt to hide their weaknesses. Once they see that they can admit to them without prejudice, they feel a sense of relief and are ready to play their part in the team in a more open manner.
This section focuses primarily on the practice and process of engaging in group and team activities.
7. Professional Writing

I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter.
-James A. Michener
Half my life is an act of revision.
-John Irving

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES

1. Find an article you read online and review it, noting at least one area that would benefit from revision. Please share your results with classmates.
2. Exchange draft revisions of a document prepared for a class or work assignment with a classmate or colleague. Note at least one strength and one area for improvement. Provide feedback to the writer.

One of the hardest tests to pass is the one of peer review. In the academic environment, professors conduct research, learn lessons, and share their findings by contributing articles for professional journals. Each academic journal article undergoes peer review, or evaluation by colleagues in the same field as the professor who wrote the article. These evaluations, often conducted by leaders in each field, do not only consider the value of the writer's findings. They also evaluate the mechanics of the document (spelling and grammar) and its presentation, organization, and design. The first time a scholar submits an article for peer review, he or she can expect rejections and liberal use of the red pen.

You may not experience such a rigorous and vigorous review of your writing, but in many ways the world of business is equally challenging. Academic publications ultimately value solid findings that contribute to the field or discipline. Business writing ultimately values writing that produces results or outcomes in environments where you do not have the luxury of controlling the variables, designing the context, or limiting the scope of your inquiry. Your business document will be evaluated by people you never met or even anticipated would read it, and errors will have a negative impact on its performance.

In every career, industry, and profession, today's business climate is a results-oriented environment. Regardless of what you write, there exists the possibility, even probability, that misunderstandings and miscommunications can and will occur. Although you will not always have control over the importance of the ideas you are assigned to communicate in your writing, there is one thing you can control: errors. If you avoid mistakes, both in the document itself and in the way your audience interprets your message, your document will have its best chance of success. To this end a thorough revision is an important part of your writing process.

As you review and evaluate documents, those written by you and others, you will need to keep in mind the three goals of being correct, clear, and concise. Next you will have to focus on effectiveness and efficiency, recognizing that in a climate of increasing demands and limited resources like time, you need to get it right the first time.
The environment of a business writer can be stressful, but it can also be rewarding. Recognition from your peers—suppliers, internal department colleagues, or customers—can make it all worthwhile. Still, the reward in terms of acknowledgement may come in the form of silence. When your document clearly meets expectations and accomplishes its goal, the outcome may be the absence of error or misinterpretation, a rare occasion that often goes unheralded. As a business writer you need to value your work and note what works. When it does, take pride in your hard work in effort. You may not always be celebrated for your error-free documents that communicate concepts and ideas clearly, but know that they are successful, and their success is your success.

1 General Revision Points to Consider

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the process of revision
2. List three general elements of every document that require revision

Just when you think the production of your document is done, the revision process begins. Runners often refer to “the wall,” where the limits of physical exertion are met and exhaustion is imminent. The writing process requires effort, from overcoming writer's block to the intense concentration composing a document often involves. It is only natural to have a sense of relief when your document is drafted from beginning to end. This relief is false confidence, though. Your document is not complete, and in its current state it could, in fact, do more harm than good. Errors, omissions, and unclear phrases may lurk within your document, waiting to reflect poorly on you when it reaches your audience. Now is not time to let your guard down, prematurely celebrate, or to mentally move on to the next assignment. Think of the revision process as one that hardens and strengthens your document, even though it may require the sacrifice of some hard-earned writing.

General revision requires attention to content, organization, style, and readability. These four main categories should give you a template from which to begin to explore details in depth. A cursory review of these elements in and of itself is insufficient for even the briefest review. Across this chapter we will explore ways to expand your revision efforts to cover the common areas of weakness and error. You may need to take some time away from your document to approach it again with a fresh perspective. Writers often juggle multiple projects that are at different stages of development. This allows the writer to leave one document and return to another without losing valuable production time. Overall, your goal is similar to what it was during your writing preparation and production: a clear mind.

Evaluate Content

Content is only one aspect of your document. Let's say you were assigned a report on the sales trends for a specific product in a relatively new market. You could produce a one-page chart comparing last year's results to current figures and call it a day, but would it clearly and concisely deliver content that is useful and correct? Are you supposed to highlight trends? Are you supposed to spotlight factors that contributed to the increase or decrease? Are you supposed to include projections for next year? Our list of questions could continue, but for now let's focus on content and its relationship to the directions. Have you included the content that corresponds to the given assignment, left any information out that may be necessary to fulfill the expectations, or have you gone beyond the assignment directions?
Content will address the central questions of who, what, where, when, why and how within the range and parameters of the assignment.

Evaluate Organization

Organization is another key aspect of any document. Standard formats that include an introduction, body, and conclusion may be part of your document, but did you decide on a direct or indirect approach? Can you tell? A direct approach will announce the main point or purpose at the beginning, while an indirect approach will present an introduction before the main point. Your document may use any of a wide variety of organizing principles, such as chronological, spatial, compare/contrast. Is your organizing principle clear to the reader?

Beyond the overall organization, pay special attention to transitions. Readers often have difficulty following a document if the writer makes the common error of failing to make one point relevant to the next, or to illustrate the relationships between the points. Finally, your conclusion should mirror your introduction and not introduce new material.

Evaluate Style

Style is created through content and organization, but also involves word choice and grammatical structures. Is your document written in an informal or formal tone, or does it present a blend, a mix, or an awkward mismatch? Does it provide a coherent and unifying voice with a professional tone? If you are collaborating on the project with other writers or contributors, pay special attention to unifying the document across the different authors’ styles of writing. Even if they were all to write in a professional, formal style, the document may lack a consistent voice. Read it out loud—can you tell who is writing what? If so, that is a clear clue that you need to do more revising in terms of style.

Evaluate Readability

Readability refers to the reader's ability to read and comprehend the document. A variety of tools are available to make an estimate of a document's reading level, often correlated to a school grade level. If this chapter has a reading level of 11.8, it would be appropriate for most readers in the eleventh grade. But just because you are in grade thirteen, eighteen, or twenty-one doesn't mean that your audience, in their everyday use of language, reads at a postsecondary level. As a business writer, your goal is to make your writing clear and concise, not complex and challenging.

You can often use the “Tools” menu of your word processing program to determine the approximate reading level of your document. The program will evaluate the number of characters per word, add in the number of words per sentence, and come up with a rating. It may also note the percentage of passive sentences, and other information that will allow you to evaluate readability. Like any computer-generated rating, it should serve you as one point of evaluation, but not the only point. Your concerted effort to choose words you perceive as appropriate for the audience will serve you better than any computer evaluation of your writing.
KEY TAKEAWAY

The four main categories—content, organization, style, and readability—provide a template for general revision.

EXERCISES

1. Select a document, such as an article from a Web site, newspaper, magazine, or a piece of writing you have completed for a course. Evaluate the document according to the four main categories described in this section. Could the document benefit from revision in any of these areas? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask how much time and attention they dedicate to the revision process of their written work. Compare your results with classmates.
3. Find a particularly good example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.
4. Find a particularly bad example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.

2 Specific Revision Points to Consider

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. List six specific elements of every document to check for revision

When revising your document, it can be helpful to focus on specific points. When you consider each point in turn, you will be able to break down the revision process into manageable steps. When you have examined each point, you can be confident that you have avoided many possible areas for errors. Specific revision requires attention to the following:

- Format
- Facts
- Names
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

Let’s examine these characteristics one by one.
Format

Format is an important part of the revision process. Format involves the design expectations of author and audience. If a letter format normally designates a date at the top, or the sender's address on the left side of the page before the salutation, the information should be in the correct location. Formatting that is messy or fails to conform to the company style will reflect poorly on you before the reader even starts to read it. By presenting a document that is properly formatted according to the expectations of your organization and your readers, you will start off making a good impression.

Facts

Another key part of the revision process is checking your facts. Did you know that news organizations and magazines employ professional fact-checkers? These workers are responsible for examining every article before it gets published and consulting original sources to make sure the information in the article is accurate. This can involve making phone calls to the people who were interviewed for the article—for example, “Mr. Diaz, our report states that you are thirty-nine years old. Our article will be published on the fifteenth. Will that be your correct age on that date?” Fact checking also involves looking facts up in encyclopedias, directories, atlases, and other standard reference works; and, increasingly, in online sources.

While you can't be expected to have the skills of a professional fact-checker, you do need to reread your writing with a critical eye to the information in it. Inaccurate content can expose you and your organization to liability, and will create far more work than a simple revision of a document. So, when you revise a document, ask yourself the following:

- Does my writing contain any statistics or references that need to be verified?
- Where can I get reliable information to verify it?

It is often useful to do independent verification—that is, look up the fact in a different source from the one where you first got it. For example, perhaps a colleague gave you a list of closing averages for the Dow Jones Industrial on certain dates. You still have the list, so you can make sure your document agrees with the numbers your colleague provided. But what if your colleague made a mistake? The Web sites of the Wall Street Journal and other major newspapers list closings for "the Dow," so it is reasonably easy for you to look up the numbers and verify them independently.
Always spell a person's name correctly.

There is no more embarrassing error in business writing than to misspell someone's name. To the writer, and to some readers, spelling a name “Michelle” instead of “Michele” may seem like a minor matter, but to Michele herself it will make a big difference. Attribution is one way we often involve a person's name, and giving credit where credit is due is essential. There are many other reasons for including someone's name, but regardless of your reasons for choosing to focus on them, you need to make sure the spelling is correct. Incorrect spelling of names is a quick way to undermine your credibility; it can also have a negative impact on your organization's reputation, and in some cases it may even have legal ramifications.

Spelling

Correct spelling is another element essential for your credibility, and errors will be glaringly obvious to many readers. The negative impact on your reputation as a writer, and its perception that you lack attention to detail or do not value your work, will be hard to overcome. In addition to the negative personal consequences, spelling errors can become factual errors and destroy the value of content. This may lead you to click the “spell check” button in your word
processing program, but computer spell-checking is not enough. Spell checkers have improved in the years since they were first invented, but they are not infallible. They can and do make mistakes.

Typically, your incorrect word may in fact be a word, and therefore, according to the program, correct. For example, suppose you wrote, “The major will attend the meeting” when you meant to write “The mayor will attend the meeting.” The program would miss this error because “major” is a word, but your meaning would be twisted beyond recognition.

Punctuation

**Punctuation marks** are the traffic signals, signs, and indications that allow us to navigate the written word. They serve to warn us in advance when a transition is coming or the complete thought has come to an end. A period indicates the thought is complete, while a comma signals that additional elements or modifiers are coming. Correct signals will help your reader follow the thoughts through sentences and paragraphs, and enable you to communicate with maximum efficiency while reducing the probability of error.¹

**Table 1 “Punctuation Marks”** lists twelve punctuation marks that are commonly used in English in alphabetical order along with an example of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophe</td>
<td>’ Michele's report is due tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>: This is what I think: you need to revise your paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>, The report advised us when to sell, what to sell, and where to find buyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dash</td>
<td>– This is more difficult than it seems—buyers are scarce when credit is tight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>… Lincoln spoke of “a new nation...dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclamation Point</td>
<td>! How exciting!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyphen</td>
<td>– The question is a many-faceted one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parentheses</td>
<td>( ) To answer it (or at least to begin addressing it) we will need more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>. The answer is no. Period. Full stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Mark</td>
<td>? Can I talk you into changing your mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation Marks</td>
<td>“ ” The manager told him, “I will make sure Renée is available to help you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semicolon</td>
<td>; Theresa was late to the meeting; her computer had frozen and she was stuck at her desk until a tech rep came to fix it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be daunting to realize that the number of possible punctuation errors is as extensive as the number of symbols and constructions available to the author. Software program may catch many punctuation errors, but again it is the committed writer that makes the difference. Here we will provide details on how to avoid mistakes with three of the most commonly used punctuation marks: the comma, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

Commas

The comma is probably the most versatile of all punctuation marks. This means you as a writer can use your judgment in many cases as to whether you need a comma or not. It also means that the possible errors involving commas are many. Commas are necessary some of the time, but careless writers often place a comma in a sentence where it is simply not needed.

Commas are used to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction like “but,” “and,” and “or.”

**Example**
The advertising department is effective, but don’t expect miracles in this business climate.

Commas are not used simply to join two independent clauses. This is known as the comma splice error, and the way to correct it is to insert a conjunction after the comma.

**Examples**
The advertising department is effective, the sales department needs to produce more results.
The advertising department is effective, but the sales department needs to produce more results.

Commas are used for introductory phrases and to offset clauses that are not essential to the sentence. If the meaning would remain intact without the phrase, it is considered nonessential.

**Examples**
*After the summary of this year’s sales,* the sales department had good reason to celebrate.
The sales department, *last year’s winner of the most productive award,* celebrated their stellar sales success this year.
The sales department celebrated their stellar sales success this year.

Commas are used to offset words that help create unity across a sentence like “however” and “therefore.”

**Examples**
The sales department discovered, however, that the forecast for next year is challenging. *However,* the sales department discovered that the forecast for next year is challenging.

Commas are often used to separate more than one adjective modifying a noun.

**Example**
The sales department discovered the troublesome, challenging forecast for next year.

Commas are used to separate addresses, dates, and titles; they are also used in dialogue sequences.

**Examples**
John is from Ancud, Chile.
Katy was born on August 2, 2002.
Mackenzie McLean, D. V., is an excellent veterinarian.
Lisa said, “When writing, omit needless words.”
Semicolons

Semicolons have two uses. First, they indicate relationships among groups of items in a series when the individual items are separated by commas. Second, a semicolon can be used to join two independent clauses; this is another way of avoiding the comma splice error mentioned above. Using a semicolon this way is often effective if the meaning of the two independent clauses is linked in some way, such as a cause-effect relationship.

Examples
Merchandise on order includes women's wear such as sweaters, skirts, and blouses; men's wear such as shirts, jackets, and slacks; and outwear such as coats, parkas, and hats.
The sales campaign was successful; without its contributions our bottom line would have been dismal indeed.

Apostrophes

The apostrophe, like the semicolon, has two uses: it replaces letters omitted in a contraction, and it often indicates the possessive.

Because contractions are associated with an informal style, they may not be appropriate for some professional writing. The business writer will—always—evaluate the expectations and audience of the given assignment.

Examples
It's great news that sales were up. It is also good news that we've managed to reduce our advertising costs.

When you indicate possession, pay attention to the placement of the apostrophe. Nouns commonly receive “s” when they are made possessive. But plurals that end in “s” receive a hanging apostrophe when they are made possessive, and the word “it” forms the possessive (“its”) with no apostrophe at all.

Examples
Mackenzie’s sheep are ready to be sheared.
The parents’ meeting is scheduled for Thursday.
We are willing to adopt a dog that has already had its shots.

Grammar

Learning to use good, correct standard English grammar is more of a practice than an event, or even a process. Grammar involves the written construction of meaning from words and involves customs that evolve and adapt to usage over time. Because grammar is always evolving, none of us can sit back and rest assured that we “know” how to write with proper grammar. Instead, it is important to write and revise with close attention to grammar, keeping in mind that grammatical errors can undermine your credibility, reflect poorly on your employer, and cause misunderstandings.
Jean Wyrick has provided a list of common errors in grammar to watch out for, which we have adapted here for easy reference. In each case, the error is in italics and the [correct form] is italicized within square bracket below.

Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject and verb should agree on the number under consideration. In faulty writing, a singular subject is sometimes mismatched with a plural verb form, or vice versa.

Examples

Sales have not been consistent and they doesn’t [do not] reflect your hard work and effort.
The president appreciates your hard work and wish [wishes] to thank you.

Verb Tense

Verb tense refers to the point in time where action occurs. The most common tenses are past, present, and future. There is nothing wrong with mixing tenses in a sentence if the action is intended to take place at different times. In faulty or careless writing, however, they are often mismatched illogically.

Examples

Sharon was under pressure to finish the report, so she uses [used] a shortcut to paste in the sales figures.
The sales department holds a status meeting every week, and last week’s meeting will be [was] at the Garden Inn.

Split Infinitive

The infinitive form of verb is one without a reference to time, and in its standard form it includes the auxiliary word “to,” as in “to write is to revise.” It has been customary to keep the “to” next to the verb; to place an adverb between them is known as splitting the infinitive. Some modern writers do this all the time (for example, “to boldly go...”), and since all grammar is essentially a set of customs that govern the written word, you will need to understand what the custom is where you work. If you are working with colleagues trained across the last fifty years, they may find split infinitives annoying. For this reason, it’s often best to avoid splitting an infinitive wherever you can do so without distorting the meaning of the sentence.

Examples

The Marketing Department needs assistance to accurately understand our readers [to understand our readers accurately].
David pondered how best to revise [how best to revise] the sentence.

Double Negative

A double negative uses two negatives to communicate a single idea, duplicating the negation. In some languages, such as Spanish, when the main action in the sentence is negative, it is correct to express the other elements in the sentence negatively as well. However, in English, this is incorrect. In addition to sounding wrong (you can often hear the error if you read the sentence out loud), a double negative in English causes an error in logic, because two negatives cancel each other out and yield a positive. In fact, the wording of ballot measures is often criticized for confusing voters with double negatives.

Examples

John doesn’t need no [any] assistance with his sales presentation. [Or John needs no assistance with his sales presentation.]
Jeri could not find no [any] reason to approve the request. [Or Jeri could find no reason to approve the request.]

Irregular Verbs

Most verbs represent the past with the addition of the suffix “ed,” as in “ask” becomes “asked.” Irregular verbs change a vowel or convert to another word when representing the past tense. Consider the irregular verb “to go”; the past tense is “went,” not “goed.”

Examples

The need arised [arose] to seek additional funding.
Katy leaped [leapt] onto the stage to introduce the presentation.

Commas in a Series

A comma is used to separate the items in a series, but in some writing styles the comma is omitted between the final two items of the series, where the conjunction joins the last and next-to-last items. The comma in this position is known as the “serial comma.” The serial comma is typically required in academic writing and typically omitted in journalism. Other writers omit the serial comma if the final two items in the series have a closer logical connection than the other items. In business writing, you may use it or omit it according to the prevailing style in your organization or industry. Know your audience and be aware of the rule.

Examples

Lisa is an amazing wife, mother, teacher, gardener, and editor.
Lisa is an amazing wife, mother teacher, gardener and editor.
Lisa is an amazing teacher, editor, gardener, wife and mother.

Faulty Comparisons

When comparing two objects by degree, there should be no mention of “est,” as in “biggest” as all you can really say is
that one is bigger than the other. If you are comparing three or more objects, then “est” will accurately communicate which is the “biggest” of them all.

Examples
Between the twins, Mackenzie is the fastest of the two.
Among our three children, Mackenzie is the tallest.

Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers describe a subject in a sentence or indicate how or when the subject carried out the action. If the subject is omitted, the modifier intended for the subject is left dangling or hanging out on its own without a clear relationship to the sentence. Who is doing the seeing in the first sentence?

Examples
Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, celebrations were in order.
Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, we decided that celebrations were in order.

Misplaced Modifiers

Modifiers that are misplaced are not lost, they are simply in the wrong place. Their unfortunate location is often far from the word or words they describe, making it easy for readers to misinterpret the sentence.

Examples
Trying to avoid the deer, the tree hit my car.
My car hit the tree when I tried to avoid a deer in the road.

KEY TAKEAWAY

By revising for format, facts, names, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you can increase your chances of correcting many common errors in your writing.

EXERCISES

1. Select a news article from a news Web site, newspaper, or magazine. Find as many facts in the article as you can that could require fact-checking. Then check as many of these facts as you can,
using sources available to you in the library and on the Internet. Did you find any errors in the article? Discuss your findings with your classmates.

2. Find an example of an assertion without attribution and share it with classmates.

3. Find an example of an error in a published document and share it with classmates.

4. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask them to share a story where an error got past them during the revision process and made it to print or publication. How did they handle it? How much time did it take to correct? What did they learn from the experience? Compare your results with classmates.

Style Revisions

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Discuss and demonstrate the use of twelve points to consider for style revisions.

You know the difference between cloudy and clear water, but can you tell when your writing is cloudy, when meaning is hidden in shadows, when the message you are trying to communicate is obscured by the style you use to present it? Water filtration involves removing particulates, harmful inorganic and organic materials, and clarifying the water. In the same way, the revision process requires filtration. You may come across word choices you thought were appropriate at the time or notice words you thought you wrote but are absent, and the revision process will start to produce results. Some words and sentence constructions will be harmful to the effective delivery and require attention. Some transitions fail to show the connections between thoughts and need to be changed.

Another way of conceptualizing the revision process in general and the clarifying process specifically is the common reference to a diamond in the rough. Like muddy water, diamonds do not come to have significant value until they have had their rough edges removed, have received expert polish, and been evaluated for clarity. Your attention to this important process will bring the value quotient of your writing up as it begins to more accurately communicate intended meaning. As we've discussed before, now is not the time to lose momentum. Just the opposite, now is the time to make your writing shine.

Here we will discuss several strategies to help clarify your writing style. If you have made wise word choices, the then next step to clarifying your document is to take it sentence by sentence. Each sentence should stand on its own, but each sentence is also interdependent on all other sentences in your document. These strategies will require significant attention to detail and an awareness of grammar that might not be your area of strength, but the more you practice them the more they will become good habits that will enhance your writing.
Break Up Long Sentences

By revising long sentences you can often increase the overall clarity of your document. To do this, let’s start off with one strategy that will produce immediate results. Count the number of conjunctions in your document. Word processing programs will often perform a search for a specific word and for our use, “and” will do just fine. Simple sentences often become compound and complex through the use of the word “and.” The further the subject, the action, and the modifiers or descriptions are from one another is directly related to the complexity of the sentence, increasing the probability of reader error and misunderstandings. Look for the word “and” and evaluate whether the sentence has two complete thoughts or ideas. Does it try to join two dissimilar ideas or ones better off on their own?

In prose, and your expository writing classes, you may have learned that complex sentences can communicate emotions, settings, and scenes that evoke a sense of place and time with your reading audience. In business writing, our goals aim more toward precision and the elimination of error; a good business document won’t read like a college essay. A professor may have advised you to avoid short, choppy writing. Are we asking you to do something along those lines? No. Choppy writing is hard to follow, but simple, clear writing does the job with a minimum of fuss and without decoration.

But we would also qualify its use: when you have two long and awkward independent clauses that form an unwieldy sentence, it may indeed be better to divide the clauses into two independent sentences. Your skill as a business writer is required to balance the needs of the sentence to communicate meaning with your understanding of audience expectations, and clarity often involves concise sentences.

Revise Big Words and Long Phrases

Big words can clutter your writing with needless jargon that may be a barrier to many readers. Even if you know your audience has significant education and training in a field, you may need to include definitions and examples as effective strategies to communicate meaning. Don't confuse simple writing with simplistic writing. Your task will almost certainly not require an elementary approach for new readers, but it may very well require attention to words and the degree to which they contribute to, or detract from, the communication of your intended message. Long noun sequences, often used as descriptive phrases, can be one example of how writing can reduce clarity. If you need to describe a noun, use a phrase that modifies the noun clearly, with commas to offset for example, to enhance clarity.

Another long phrase to watch out for is often located in the introduction. Long preambles can make the sentence awkward and will require revision. Sentences that start with “It is” or “There are” can often be shortened or made clearer through revision.

Evaluate Long Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase is a phrase composed of a preposition (a “where” word; a word that indicates location) and its object, which may be a noun, a pronoun, or a clause. Some examples of simple prepositional phrases include “with Tom,” “before me,” and “inside the building security perimeter.”

Prepositional phrases are necessary—it would be difficult to write without them—but some add to the bottom line word count without adding much to the sentence. Bureaucratic writing often uses this technique in an attempt to make a sentence sound important, but the effort usually has the undesirable dual effects of obscuring meaning and sounding pompous.
The revision places an adverb in place of a long prepositional phrase and allows for a reduction in the word count while strengthening the sentence.

**Delete Repetitious Words**

Some level of repetition is to be expected and can be beneficial. It is also important to be consistent in your use of words when precise terminology is appropriate. However, needless repetition can make your document less than vigorous and discourage readers. For example, use of the word “said” when attributing dialogue is acceptable a couple of times, but if it is the only word you use, it will lose its impact quickly. People can “indicate,” “point out,” “share,” and “mention” as easily as they can “say” words or phrases. Synonyms are useful in avoiding the boredom of repetition.

**Eliminate Archaic Expressions or References**

Some writing has been ritualized to the point of cliché and has lost its impact. For example, consider “Heretofore, we have discussed the goal of omitting needless words.” *Heretofore* is an outdated word that could easily be cut from the previous sentence. Another example is “as per your request for documents that emphasize clarity and reduce reader error.” Feel free to eliminate as per your request from your word choices.

Similar to outdated words and phrases, some references are equally outdated. While it is important to recognize leaders in a field, and this text does include references to pioneers in the field of communication, it also focuses on current research and concepts. Without additional clarification and examples, readers may not understand references to an author long since passed even though he or she made an important contribution to the field. For example, Shannon and Weaver pioneered the linear model of communication that revolutionized our understanding of interaction and contributed to computer interfaces as we know them today. However, if we mention them without explaining how their work relates to our current context, we may lose our readers.

**Avoid Fillers**

Like, you know, like, you know what I mean, ahh, umm, and all the fillers you may use or hear in oral communication have, well, little or no place in the written representation of the spoken word. Review your writing for extra words that serve the written equivalent of “like” and omit them. They do not serve you as an author, and do not serve the reading audience.

Eliminate Slang

Many college professors can give examples of e-mails they have received from students that use all the modern characteristics of instant message and text abbreviation combined with a complete disregard for any norms of grammar or spelling, resulting in nearly incomprehensible messages. If your goal is to be professional, and the audience expectations do not include the use of slang, then it is inappropriate to include it in your document. Eliminate slang as you would a jargon term that serves as a barrier to understanding meaning. Not everyone will understand your slang word no more than they would a highly specialized term, and it will defeat your purpose. Norms for capitalization and punctuation that are routinely abandoned in efficient text messages or tweets are necessary and required in professional documents. Finally, there is no place in reputable business writing for offensive slang or profanity.

Evaluate Clichés

Clichés are words or phrases that through their overuse have lost their impact. That definition does not imply they have lost their meaning, and sometimes a well-placed cliché can communicate a message effectively. “Actions speak louder than words” is a cliché, but its five words speak volumes that many of your readers will recognize. This appeal to familiarity can be an effective strategy to communicate, but use it carefully. Excessive reliance on clichés will make your writing trite, while eliminating them altogether may not serve you well either. As an effective business writer, you will need to evaluate your use of clichés for their impact versus detraction from your message.

Emphasize Precise Words

Concrete words that are immediately available to your audience are often more effective than abstract terms that require definitions, examples, and qualifications. All these strategies have their place, but excessive use of abstractions will make your document less than precise, requiring additional clarification that can translate to work for you as the author and, more importantly, for your readers. Qualifiers deserve special mention here. Some instructors may indicate that words like “may,” “seems,” or “apparently” make your writing weak. Words are just words and it is how we use them that creates meaning. Some qualifiers are necessary, particularly if the document serves as record or may be the point of discussion in a legal issue. In other cases direct language is required, and qualifiers must be eliminated. Too many qualifiers can weaken your writing, but too few can expose you to liability. As a business writer, your understanding of audience expectations and assignment requirements will guide you to the judicious use of qualifiers.

Evaluate Parallel Construction

When you are writing in a series or have more than one idea to express, it is important to present them in similar ways to preserve and promote unity across your document. **Parallel construction** refers to the use of same grammatical pattern; it can be applied to words, phrases, and sentences. For example, “We found the seminar interesting, entertaining, and inspiring” is a sentence with parallel construction, whereas “We found the seminar interesting, entertaining, and it inspired us” is not. If your sentences do not seem to flow well, particularly when you read them out loud, look for misplaced parallels and change them to make the construction truly parallel.
Obscured Verbs

Business writing should be clear and concise. If the meaning is obscured, then revision is required. One common problem is the conversion of verbs into nouns with the addition of suffixes like: -ant, -ent, -ion, -tion, -sion, -ence, -ance, and ing. Instead of hiding meaning within the phrase “through the consolidation of,” consider whether to use the verb forms “consolidated” or “consolidating.” Similarly, instead of “the inclusion of,” consider using “including,” which will likely make the sentence more active and vigorous.

The “Is It Professional?” Test

Finally, when revising your document with an attention to detail, you simply need to ask the question: is it professional? If a document is too emphatic, it may seem like an attempt at cheerleading. If it uses too much jargon, it may be appropriate for “nerds” but may limit access to the information by a nontechnical audience. If the document appears too simplistic, it may seem to be “talking down” to the audience, treating the readers more like children than adults. Does your document represent you and your organization in a professional manner? Will you be proud of the work a year from now? Does it accomplish its mission, stated objectives, and the audience's expectations? Business writing is not expository, wordy, or decorative, and the presence of these traits may obscure meaning. Business writing is professional, respectful, and clearly communicates a message with minimal breakdown.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Revising for style can increase a document's clarity, conciseness, and professionalism.

EXERCISES

1. Which of the following sentences are examples of good business writing in standard English? For the sentences needing improvement, make revisions as you see fit and explain what was wrong with the original sentence. Discuss your results with your classmates.

   1. Caitlin likes gardening, golfing, hiking, and to swim.
   2. At any given point in time, well, there is a possibility that we could, like, be called upon for help.
   3. The evaluation of writing can be done through the examination and modification of each sentence.
   4. While in the meeting, the fire alarm rang.
   5. Children benefit from getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, and outdoor playtime.
   6. Yee has asked us to maximize the department's ka-ching by enhancing the bling-bling of our merchandise; if we fail to do this the darn president may put the kibosh on our project.
7. Ortega’s memo stated in no uncertain terms that all employees need to arrive for work on time every day.

8. Although there are many challenges in today’s market and stock values have dropped considerably since last year, but we can hope to benefit from strategic thinking and careful decision making.

9. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please let Steve or I know as soon as possible.

10. One of the shipping containers are open.

2. Find an example of a good example of effective business writing, review it, and share it with your classmates.

3. Find an example of a bad example of effective business writing, review it, and share it with your classmates.

4. Revision requires attention to detail, and you may be under pressure to produce quality results within a deadline. How do you communicate your need for time for the revision process to those who are waiting on you to complete the document? Share and discuss your responses with your classmates.

Evaluating the Work of Others

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe five elements of critical analysis to use in evaluating someone else's writing.

2. Demonstrate how to deliver an evaluation constructively and respectfully.

As an experienced business writer, you may be called upon to review others’ work. Having a clear understanding of the process will help you be efficient in your review, producing constructive advice that would benefit the essay while resisting change for change's sake.

Five Steps in EVALUATION

By following a sequence of orderly steps, you can increase the likelihood that your evaluation of someone else's writing will be fair, constructive, and useful. Below are the five steps in evaluation:

1. Understand the assignment.

2. Evaluate how well the writing carries out the assignment.

3. Evaluate assertions.
4. Check facts.

5. Look for errors.

First, review the instructions that were given to the writer. Make sure you understand the assignment and the target audience. What resources did the writer have access to, and how much time was allotted for completing the assignment? What purpose did the document need to fulfill, and what role will this document have in future business activities or decisions?

Second, evaluate how well the document fulfills its stated goals. As a reader, do you see the goals carried out in the document? If you didn’t know the writer and you were to find the document next year in a file where you were searching for information, would it provide you with the information it aims to convey? For example, suppose the document refers to the sales history of the past five years. Does the writer provide the sales history for the reader’s reference, or indicate where the reader can get this information?

Evaluate the assertions made in the document. An assertion is a declaration, statement, or claim of fact. Suppose the writer indicates that the sales history for the past five years is a significant factor. Does the writer explain why this history is significant? Is the explanation logical and sufficient?

Evaluate the facts cited in the document. Does the writer credit the sources of facts, statistics, and numbers? For example, suppose the writer mentions that the population of the United States is approximately three hundred million. Obviously, the writer did not count all U.S. residents to arrive at this number. Where did it come from? If you have access to sources where you can independently verify the accuracy of these details, look them up and note any discrepancies.

Finally, check the document for proper format and for errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Word processing spell checkers do not catch all errors.

Delivering the Evaluation

If you are asked to evaluate someone else’s written work, keep in mind that not everyone can separate process from product, or product from personality. Many authors, particularly those new to the writing process, see the written word as an extension of self. To help the recipient receive your evaluation as professional advice, rather than as personal criticism, use strategies to be tactful and diplomatic.

Until you know the author and have an established relationship, it is best to use “I” statements, as in “I find this sentence difficult to understand.” The sentence places the emphasis on the speaker rather than the sentence, and further distances the author from the sentence. If you were to say, “This sentence is awful,” all the author may hear is, “I am an awful writer” and fail to pay attention to your message, the sentence under examination, or ways to improve it. Business writing produces products, and all products can be improved, but not all authors can separate messenger from message.

Avoid the use of the word you in your evaluation, oral or written, as it can put the recipient on the defensive. This will inhibit listening and decrease the probability of effective communication. If you phrase an evaluation point as, “Why did you include this word here?” it can be interpreted as a personal attack. Just as speakers are often quite self-conscious of their public speaking abilities, writers are often quite attached to the works they have produced. Anticipating and respecting this relationship and the anxiety it sometimes carries can help you serve as a better evaluator.

To help the recipient receive your evaluation as professional advice, rather than as personal criticism, use strategies to be tactful and diplomatic.

Phrasing disagreement as a question is often an effective response strategy. Let’s rephrase that previous question to, “What is this sentence intended to communicate?” This places the emphasis on the sentence, not the author, and allows for dialogue. Phrasing your evaluation as a question emphasizes your need to understand, and provides the author with space to respond in a collaborative fashion.

Focus on the document as a product, an “it,” and avoid associating the author or authors with it. There may be times when the social rank or status of the individual involved with work requires respectful consideration, and choosing to focus on the document as a work in progress, distinct from authors themselves, can serve you well. This also means that at times you may notice a glaring error but be reluctant to challenge the author directly as you anticipate a less than collaborative response. By treating the document as a product, and focusing on ways to strengthen it, keeping in mind our goals of clear and concise as reference points, you can approach issues without involving personalities.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

When evaluating the work of others, make sure you understand the assignment, evaluate how well the writing carries out the assignment, evaluate assertions, check facts, and watch for errors. Deliver your evaluation with tact and diplomacy.

**EXERCISES**

1. Select a piece of writing from a Web site, book, newspaper, or magazine. Imagine that you are delivering an evaluation to the author of the piece. Using the strategies in this section, write a tactful and diplomatic critique. Your instructor may choose to make this a class exercise, asking students to exchange papers and evaluate each others’ writing.
2. Select a piece of writing from a Web site, book, newspaper, or magazine. Imagine that you are editing it half its original length. Share the article and your revised copy with your classmates.
3. What responsibility do you have to point out the need for correction in a document when the author or team leader outranks you at work? Does it make a difference if you anticipate they will take the feedback negatively? How do you reconcile these concerns with your responsibility to the organization? Share and discuss your responses with your classmates.
Proofreading and Design Evaluation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the difference between revising and proofreading, and how to use proofreading marks.

2. Describe six design elements for evaluation.

In traditional publishing, proofreading and design are the final stages a book undergoes before it is published. If the earlier steps of research, organizing, writing, revising, and formatting have been done carefully, proofreading and design should go smoothly. Now is not the time to go back and revise a document's content, or to experiment with changes in format. Instead, the emphasis is on catching any typographical errors that have slipped through the revision process, and "pouring" the format into a design that will enhance the writer's message.

Proofreading

By now you have completed a general and specific review of the document, with attention to detail. You may have made changes, and most word processing programs will allow you to track those changes across several versions and authors. If you work in an environment where a document exists as a hard copy during the revision process, you may use or see handwritten proofreading symbols. Professional proofreaders often use standard markings that serve to indicate where changes needed to be made on a physical document. Some of today's word processing programs incorporate many proofreading symbols in their menus. It is useful to be familiar with the various proofreading marks that were traditionally used to review and revise hard copy documents. Even if you never use the symbols in a document, your awareness of them—and the points of emphasis under review—will serve you well. Do you need to insert a word, delete a word, capitalize a letter, or start a new paragraph? There are specific symbols for each of these actions because the review and revision process has common and consistent elements that need to be addressed.

Design Evaluation

If you are asked to review a document, design an element that deserves consideration. While most of our attention has focused on words (i.e., sentence construction and common errors), design can have a strong impact on the representation and presentation of information.

Framing

Framing refers to how information is presented, including margins, line justifications, and template expectations. Just as frame creates a border around a painting, highlighting part of the image while hiding the margins, the frame of a page influences how information is received. Margins create space around the edge and help draw attention to the content. One-inch margins are standard, but differences in margin widths will depend on the assignment requirements. A brief letter, for example, may have margins as wide as two inches so that the body of the letter fills up the stationery in a
more balanced fashion. Template expectations are distinct from audience expectation, though they are often related. Most software programs have templates for basic documents, including letters, reports, and résumés.

Templates represent the normative expectations for a specific type of document. Templates have spaces that establish where a date should be indicated and where personal contact information should be represented. They also often allow you to “fill in the blank,” reflecting each document’s basic expectations of where information is presented.

For example, line justification involves where the text lines up on the page. Letters often have a left justify, lining up the text on the left side of the page while allowing the ends of each line on the right side to be “ragged,” or not aligned. This creates even spaces between words and gives the appearance of organization while promoting white space, the space on the page free of text. Balance between text (often black) and white space creates contrast and allows for areas of emphasis. Left justify often produces the appearance of balance, as the words are evenly spaced, while left and right justify can produce large gaps between words, making the sentences appear awkward and hard to read.

Typefaces

Typeface refers to design of symbols, including letters and numbers. The creation of the face of the type, as in a typing machine or printing press, has long been both an art and a science. In past centuries, carvings of the face of the type in copperplate, where ink was applied and then pressed to paper, created intricate and intriguing images designed to communicate style, prestige, status, and formality with the communication of words and symbols. We no longer use copper or hot lead type, but the typeface still exists as a medium for communication in addition to the word itself.

There are two general categories of typeface: serif and sans serif. “Sans” means without, so the emphasis here is on whether the face of the type has a serif or not. A serif is a small cross line, often perpendicular to the stroke of the letter, that is decorative but also serves the useful purpose of differentiating characters that could otherwise look similar (e.g., “m” and “mn,” “d” and “cl,” or “3” and “8”). For this reason, serif typefaces, such as Times New Roman and Garamond, are often easier to read, especially when the font size is small. Sans serif fonts, such as Arial and Helvetica, lack the serif and can be harder to read in long text sequences. They are most commonly used for headings. However, when text is to be read electronically (on the screen of a computer or other device), serifs can tend to break up, so sans serif typefaces can be a better choice.

The rule of thumb, or common wisdom, is to limit your document to two typefaces, contrasting sans serif (headings) with text (serif). Take care not to use a font that is hard to read, creating an unnecessary barrier for your reader. Also, use a font that conveys the tone of your professional message to enhance your effectiveness.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are the basic organizational unit for presenting and emphasizing the key points in a document. Effective paragraphs can provide an effective emphasis strategy, but the placement within the page can also influence recall and impact. The first point presented is often the second in importance, the second point is the least important, and the third point in a series of three is often the most important. People generally recall the last point presented, and tend to forget or ignore the content in the middle of a sequence. Use this strategy to place your best point in the most appropriate location.

A lengthy document that consists of paragraph after paragraph can become monotonous, making reading a chore

and obscuring pieces of information that need to stand out. To give the document visual variety and to emphasize key information, consider the following strategies:

- Bullets
- Numbers
- Boldface
- Italics
- Underlining
- Capitalization (all caps)

Remember, however, that using all caps (all capitals) for body text (as opposed to headings) is often considered rude, like shouting, particularly in electronic communications.

**Visual Aids**

If you have the luxury of including visual aids, such as graphics and pictures, in your document, take care to make sure that the verbal and visual messages complement each other. The visual should illustrate the text, and should be placed near the words so that the relationship is immediately clear. Sometimes during editing, a photograph will get pushed to the next page, leaving the relevant text behind and creating discontinuity. This creates a barrier for your reader, so avoid it if possible.

**Designing Interactive Documents**

Finally, documents increasingly have an interactivity component that can lead the reader in many directions. Providing links can facilitate interactivity, and that depth of resources can be a distinct advantage when writing documents to be read on a computer. However, be careful when integrating a web link within your document, as your audience may leave your message behind and not return. If you create a link associated with clicking on a photograph or icon, make sure that the scroll-over message is clear and communicates whether the reader will leave the current page. As we have seen in many design elements, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with each option and it requires a skilled business writer to create and deliver an effective message.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Proofreading and design put the finishing touches on a completed document.

**EXERCISES**

1. Using proofreading marks, mark the errors in the following paragraph:
   
   I never wanted to become a writer, but when I decided on a career in sales, I found out that being able to write was a skill that would help me. So much of my daily work involved Writing that I sometimes thought I’d fallen asleep
and woken up in someone else's life. Messages, about actual sales, were the least of it. In order to attract customers, I have to send notes to people I already knew, asking them for sales leads. Then when I got a lead, I'd write to the contact asking for a few minutes of their time. If I got to meet with them or even have a phone conversation, my next task was to write them a thank-you note. Oh, and the reports—I was always filing out reports; for my sales manager, tracking my progress with each customer and each lead. If someone had told me how much writing sails would involve, I think I would of paid more attention to my writing courses en school.

2. With a writing assignment in draft form from your class, swap with a classmate and review the spelling, grammar, and punctuation, using proofreading marks where applicable.

Additional Resources

- Online Writing Laboratory (OWL) at Purdue University provides a comprehensive guide to the revision process. OWL is open access, free, and an excellence resource for any writer. Please feel free to consult it anytime during our discussion to go more in depth on a grammatical point or writing tip. [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/05](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/05)
- Visit this site for a useful list of irregular verbs in English. [http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html](http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html)
- This site from Capital Community College in Connecticut provides a menu of English grammar resources. [http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar)
- EnglishClub.com is dedicated to English learners and those for whom English is a second language—but it can be useful for all of us. [http://www.englishclub.com/grammar](http://www.englishclub.com/grammar)
- The original (1918) edition of the famous style guide *The Elements of Style* is available online at Bartleby.com. [http://www.bartleby.com/141](http://www.bartleby.com/141)
- The Writers and Editors site presents an article on tact and tone in editing the work of others. [http://www.writersandeditors.com/tips_on_tact_and_tone_30805.htm](http://www.writersandeditors.com/tips_on_tact_and_tone_30805.htm)
- Merriam-Webster provides a chart of proofreader’s marks and their meanings. [http://www.merriam-webster.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm](http://www.merriam-webster.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm)
- For in-depth information on how to present visuals effectively, visit the Web site of Edward Tufte, a Professor Emeritus at Yale University, where he taught courses in statistical evidence, information design, and interface design. [http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/index](http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/index)
- For a wealth of articles and information about typefaces and other aspects of document design, explore the Web site of AIGA, the professional association for design. [http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/about](http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/about)
8. Persuasive Presentations

Content in this chapter is adapted from: https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/

We are more easily persuaded, in general, by the reasons that we ourselves discovers than by those which are given to us by others.

–Pascal

For every sale you miss because you're too enthusiastic, you will miss a hundred because you're not enthusiastic enough.

–Zig Ziglar

Getting Started

Introductory Exercises

1. Please list three things that you recently purchased, preferably in the last twenty-four hours—the things can be items or services. Decide which purchase on your list stands out as most important to you and consider why you made that purchase decision. See if you can list three reasons. Now pretend you are going to sell that same item or service to a friend—would the three reasons remain the same, or would you try additional points for them to consider? Compare your results with a classmate.

2. Please think of one major purchase you made in the past year. It should be significant to you, and not a daily or monthly purchase. Once you made the purchase decision and received the item (e.g., a car), did you notice similar cars on the roads? Did you pay attention to details like color, modifications, or reports in the popular press about quality? Did you talk to your friends about it? What kind of information did you pay attention to—information that reinforced your purchase decision, or information that detracted from your appreciation of your newly acquired possession? Discuss your responses with classmates.

No doubt there has been a time when you wanted something from your parents, your supervisor, or your friends, and you thought about how you were going to present your request. But do you think about how often people—including people you have never met and never will meet—want something from you? When you watch television, advertisements reach out for your attention, whether you watch them or not. When you use the Internet, pop-up advertisements often appear. Living in the United States, and many parts of the world, means that you have been surrounded, even inundated, by persuasive messages. Mass media in general and television in particular make a significant impact you will certainly recognize.

Consider these facts:
• The average person sees between four hundred and six hundred ads per day—that is forty million to fifty million by the time he or she is sixty years old. One of every eleven commercials has a direct message about beauty (Raimondo M., 2010).

• By age eighteen, the average American teenager will have spent more time watching television—25,000 hours—than learning in a classroom (Ship, J., 2005).

• An analysis of music videos found that nearly one-fourth of all MTV videos portray overt violence, with attractive role models being aggressors in more than 80 percent of the violent videos (DuRant, R. H., 1997).

• Forty percent of nine- and ten-year-old girls have tried to lose weight, according to an ongoing study funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (Body image and nutrition: Fast facts., 2009).

• A 1996 study found that the amount of time an adolescent watches soaps, movies, and music videos is associated with their degree of body dissatisfaction and desire to be thin (Tiggemann, M. and Pickering, A. S., 1996).

• Identification with television stars (for girls and boys), models (girls), or athletes (boys) positively correlated with body dissatisfaction (Hofschire, L. J. and Greenberg, B. S., 2002).

• At age thirteen, 53 percent of American girls are “unhappy with their bodies.” This grows to 78 percent by the time they reach seventeen (Brumber, J. J., 1997).

• By age eighteen, the average American teenager will witness on television 200,000 acts of violence, including 40,000 murders (Huston, A. C., et al., 1992).

Mass communication contains persuasive messages, often called propaganda, in narrative form, in stories and even in presidential speeches. When President Bush made his case for invading Iraq, his speeches incorporated many of the techniques we'll cover in this chapter. Your local city council often involves dialogue, and persuasive speeches, to determine zoning issues, resource allocation, and even spending priorities. You yourself have learned many of the techniques by trial and error and through imitation. If you ever wanted the keys to your parents’ car for a special occasion, you used the principles of persuasion to reach your goal.

What Is Persuasion?

**Learning Objectives**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of persuasion.
2. Describe similarities and differences between persuasion and motivation.

**Persuasion** is an act or process of presenting arguments to move, motivate, or change your audience. Aristotle taught that rhetoric, or the art of public speaking, involves the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion (Covino, W. A. and Jolliffe, D. A., 1995). In the case of President Obama, he may have appealed to your sense of duty and national values. In persuading your parents to lend you the car keys, you may have asked one parent instead of the other, calculating the probable response of each parent and electing to approach the one who was more likely to adopt your position (and give you the keys). Persuasion can be implicit or explicit and can have both positive and negative effects. In this chapter we'll discuss the importance of ethics, as we have in previous chapters, when presenting your audience with arguments in order to motivate them to adopt your view, consider your points, or change their behavior.
Motivation is distinct from persuasion in that it involves the force, stimulus, or influence to bring about change. Persuasion is the process, and motivation is the compelling stimulus that encourages your audience to change their beliefs or behavior, to adopt your position, or to consider your arguments. Why think of yourself as fat or thin? Why should you choose to spay or neuter your pet? Messages about what is beautiful, or what is the right thing to do in terms of your pet, involve persuasion, and the motivation compels you to do something.

Another way to relate to motivation also can be drawn from the mass media. Perhaps you have watched programs like Law and Order, Cold Case, or CSI where the police detectives have many of the facts of the case, but they search for motive. They want to establish motive in the case to provide the proverbial “missing piece of the puzzle.” They want to know why someone would act in a certain manner. You’ll be asking your audience to consider your position and provide both persuasive arguments and motivation for them to contemplate. You may have heard a speech where the speaker tried to persuade you, tried to motivate you to change, and you resisted the message. Use this perspective to your advantage and consider why an audience should be motivated, and you may find the most compelling examples or points. Relying on positions like “I believe it, so you should too,” “Trust me, I know what is right,” or “It’s the right thing to do” may not be explicitly stated but may be used with limited effectiveness. Why should the audience believe, trust, or consider the position “right?” Keep an audience-centered perspective as you consider your persuasive speech to increase your effectiveness.

You may think initially that many people in your audience would naturally support your position in favor of spaying or neutering your pet. After careful consideration and audience analysis, however, you may find that people are more divergent in their views. Some audience members may already agree with your view, but others may be hostile to the idea for various reasons. Some people may be neutral on the topic and look to you to consider the salient arguments. Your audience will have a range of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs across a range from hostile to agreement.

Rather than view this speech as a means to get everyone to agree with you, look at the concept of measurable gain, a system of assessing the extent to which audience members respond to a persuasive message. You may reinforce existing beliefs in the members of the audience that agree with you and do a fine job of persuasion. You may also get hostile members of the audience to consider one of your arguments, and move from a hostile position to one that is more neutral or ambivalent. The goal in each case is to move the audience members toward your position. Some change may be small but measurable, and that is considered gain. The next time a hostile audience member considers the issue, they may be more open to it. Figure 1 “Measurable Gain” is a useful diagram to illustrate this concept.
Edward Hall also underlines this point when discussing the importance of context. The situation in which a conversation occurs provides a lot of meaning and understanding for the participants in some cultures. In Japan, for example, the context, such as a business setting, says a great deal about the conversation and the meaning to the words and expressions within that context. In the United States, however, the concept of a workplace or a business meeting is less structured, and the context offers less meaning and understanding.

Cultures that value context highly are aptly called high-context cultures. Those that value context to a lesser degree are called low-context cultures. These divergent perspectives influence the process of persuasion and are worthy of your consideration when planning your speech. If your audience is primarily high-context, you may be able to rely on many cultural norms as you proceed, but in a low-context culture, like the United States, you’ll be expected to provide structure and clearly outline your position and expectations. This ability to understand motivation and context is key to good communication, and one we will examine throughout this chapter.

**Key Takeaway**

Persuasion is the act of presenting arguments for change, while motivation involves the force to bring about change. The concept of measurable gain assesses audience response to a persuasive message.

**Exercises**

1. Select an online advertisement that you find particularly effective or ineffective. Why does it succeed, or fail, in persuading you to want to buy the advertised product? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.
2. Think of a social issue, widely held belief, or political position where change has occurred in your lifetime, or where you would like to see change happen. What kinds of persuasion and motivation were involved—or would need to happen—to produce measurable gain? Explain your thoughts to a classmate.
3. Think of a time when someone tried to persuade you to do something you did not want to do. Did their persuasion succeed? Why or why not? Discuss the event with a classmate.

**Meeting the Listener’s Basic Needs**

**Learning Objective**

1. Identify and describe several basic needs that people seek to fulfill when they communicate.
In this section we will examine why we communicate, illustrating how meeting the listener's basic needs is central to effective communication. It's normal for the audience to consider why you are persuading them, and there is significant support for the notion that by meeting the audience's basic needs, whether they are a customer, colleague, or supervisor, you will more effectively persuade them to consider your position.

Not all oral presentations involve taking a position, or overt persuasion, but all focus on the inherent relationships and basic needs within the business context. Getting someone to listen to what you have to say involves a measure of persuasion, and getting that person to act on it might require considerable skill. Whether you are persuading a customer to try a new product or service, or informing a supplier that you need additional merchandise, the relationship is central to your communication. The emphasis inherent in our next two discussions is that we all share this common ground, and by understanding that we share basic needs, we can better negotiate meaning and achieve understanding.

Table 1 “Reasons for Engaging in Communication” presents some reasons for engaging in communication. As you can see, the final item in the table indicates that we communicate in order to meet our needs. What are those needs? We will discuss them next.

Table 1 Reasons for Engaging in Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Why We Engage in Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain Information</td>
<td>We engage in communication to gain information. This information can involve directions to an unknown location, or a better understanding about another person through observation or self-disclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Communication</td>
<td>We also want to understand the context in which we communicate, discerning the range between impersonal and intimate, to better anticipate how to communicate effectively in each setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts</td>
<td>Through engaging in communication, we come to perceive ourselves, our roles, and our relationships with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet Our Needs</td>
<td>We meet our needs through communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maslow’s Hierarchy

If you have taken courses in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, or perhaps sociology in the past, you may have seen Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Figure 3 “Maslow’s Hierarchy”). Psychologist Abraham Maslow provides seven basic categories for human needs, and arranges them in order of priority, from the most basic to the most advanced.

In this figure, we can see that we need energy, water, and air to live. Without any of these three basic elements, which meet our physiological needs (1), we cannot survive. We need to meet them before anything else, and will often sacrifice everything else to get them. Once we have what we need to live, we seek safety (2). A defensible place, protecting your supply lines for your most basic needs, could be your home. For some, however, home is a dangerous place that compromises their safety. Children and victims of domestic violence need shelter to meet this need. In order to leave a hostile living environment, people may place the well-being and safety of another over their own needs, in effect placing themselves at risk. An animal would fight for its own survival above all else, but humans can and do acts of heroism that directly
contradict their own self-interest. Our own basic needs motivate us, but sometimes the basic needs of others are more important to us than our own.

We seek affection from others once we have the basics to live and feel safe from immediate danger. We look for a sense of love and belonging (3). All needs in Maslow’s model build on the foundation of the previous needs, and the third level reinforces our need to be a part of a family, community, or group. This is an important step that directly relates to business communication. If a person feels safe at your place of business, they are more likely to be open to communication. Communication is the foundation of the business relationship, and without it, you will fail. If they feel on edge, or that they might be pushed around, made to feel stupid, or even unwanted, they will leave and your business will disappear. On the other hand, if you make them feel welcome, provide multiple ways for them to learn, educate themselves, and ask questions in a safe environment, you will form relationships that transcend business and invite success.

Once we have been integrated in a group, we begin to assert our sense of self and self-respect, addressing our need for self-esteem (4). Self-esteem is essentially how we feel about ourselves. Let’s say you are a male, but you weren’t born with a “fix-it” gene. It’s nothing to be ashamed of, but for many men it can be hard to admit. We no longer live in a time when we have to build our own houses or learn about electricity and plumbing as we grow up, and if it is not part of your learning experience, it is unreasonable to expect that you’ll be handy with a wrench from the first turn.

The do-it-yourself chain Home Depot may have recognized how this interest in home repair is paired with many men’s reluctance to admit their lack of experience. They certainly turned it into an opportunity. Each Saturday around the country, home repair clinics on all sorts of tasks, from cutting and laying tile to building a bird house, are available free to customers at Home Depot stores. You can participate, learn, gain mastery of a skill set, and walk out of the store with all the supplies you need to get the job done. You will also now know someone (the instructor, a Home Depot employee) whom you can return to for follow-up questions. Ultimately, if you don’t succeed in getting the job done right, they will help you arrange for professional installation. This model reinforces safety and familiarity, belonging to a group or perceiving a trustworthy support system, and the freedom to make mistakes. It’s an interactive program that squarely addresses one of customers’ basic of human needs.

Maslow discusses the next level of needs in terms of how we feel about ourselves and our ability to assert control and influence over our lives. Once we are part of a group and have begun to assert ourselves, we start to feel as if we have reached our potential and are actively making a difference in our own world. Maslow calls this self-actualization (5). Self-actualization can involve reaching your full potential, feeling accepted for who you are, and perceiving a degree of control or empowerment in your environment. It may mean the freedom to go beyond building the bird house to the tree house, and to design it yourself as an example of self-expression.

As we progress beyond these levels, our basic human curiosity about the world around us emerges. When we have our basic needs met, we do not need to fear losing our place in a group or access to resources. We are free to explore and play, discovering the world around us. Our need to know (6) motivates us to grow and learn. You may have taken an elective art class that sparked your interest in a new area, or your started a new sport or hobby, like woodworking. If you worked at low-paying jobs that earned you barely enough to meet your basic needs, you may not be able to explore all your interests. You might be too exhausted after sixty or seventy hours a week on a combination of the night shift and the early morning shift across two jobs. If you didn’t have to work as many hours to meet your more basic needs, you’d have time to explore your curiosity and address the need to learn. Want to read a good book? You’d have the time. Want to take a watercolor class? Sounds interesting. If, however, we are too busy hunting and gathering food, there is little time for contemplating beauty.

Beyond curiosity lies the aesthetic need to experience beauty (7). Form is freed from function, so that a wine bottle opener can be appreciated for its clever design that resembles a rabbit’s head instead of simply how well it works to remove the cork. The appreciation of beauty transcends the everyday, the usual; it becomes exceptional. You may have walked in a building or church and become captivated by the light, the stained-glass windows, or the design. That moment that transcends the mundane, that stops you in your tracks, comes close to describing the human appreciation for the aesthetic, but it’s really up to you.

We can see in Maslow’s hierarchy how our most basic needs are quite specific, and as we progress through the levels,
the level of abstraction increases until ultimately we are freed from the daily grind to contemplate the meaning of a modern painting. As we increase our degree of interconnectedness with others, we become interdependent and, at the same time, begin to express independence and individuality. As a speaker, you may seek the safety of the familiar, only to progress with time and practice to a point where you make words your own.

Your audience will share with you a need for control. You can help meet this need by constructing your speech with an effective introduction, references to points you've discussed, and a clear conclusion. The introduction will set up audience expectations of points you will consider, and allow the audience to see briefly what is coming. Your internal summaries, signposts, and support of your main points all serve to remind the audience what you've discussed and what you will discuss. Finally, your conclusion answers the inherent question, “Did the speaker actually talk about what they said they were going to talk about?” and affirms to the audience that you have fulfilled your objectives.

**Social Penetration Theory**

The field of communication draws from many disciplines, and in this case, draws lessons from two prominent social psychologists. Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor articulated the social penetration theory, which describes how we move from superficial talk to intimate and revealing talk (Altman, I. and Taylor, D., 1973). Altman and Taylor discuss how we attempt to learn about others so that we can better understand how to interact (Altman, I. and Taylor, D., 1973). With a better understanding of others and with more information, we are in a better position to predict how they may behave, what they may value, or what they might feel in specific situations. We usually gain this understanding of others without thinking about it through observation or self-disclosure. In this model, often called the “onion model,” we see how we start out on superficial level, but as we peel away the layers, we gain knowledge about the other person that encompasses both breadth and depth.
We come to know more about the way a person perceives a situation (breadth), but also gain perspective into how they see the situation through an understanding of their previous experiences (depth). Imagine these two spheres, which represent people, coming together. What touches first? The superficial level. As the two start to overlap, the personal levels may touch, then the intimate level, and finally the core levels may even touch. Have you ever known a couple—perhaps your parents or grandparents—who have been together for a very long time? They know each other's stories and finish each other's sentences. They might represent the near overlap, where their core values, attitudes, and beliefs are similar through a lifetime of shared experiences.

**Figure 4 Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration Model, Source: Adapted from Altman and Taylor's social penetration model (Altman, I and Taylor, D., 1973).**
We move from public to private information as we progress from small talk to intimate conversations. Imagine an onion.
The outer surface can be peeled away, and each new layer reveals another until you arrive at the heart of the onion. People interact on the surface, and only remove layers as trust and confidence grows.

Another way to look at it is to imagine an iceberg. How much of the total iceberg can you see from the surface of the ocean? Not much. But once you start to look under the water, you gain an understanding of the large size of the iceberg, and the extent of its depth. We have to go beyond superficial understanding to know each other, and progress through the process of self-disclosure to come to know and understand one another. See Figure 5 “American Foreign Service Manual Iceberg Model” for an illustration of an “iceberg model” adapted from the American Foreign Service Manual (American Foreign Service Manual, 1975). This model has existed in several forms since the 1960s, and serves as a useful illustration of how little we perceive of each other with our first impressions and general assumptions.

Key Takeaway

We are motivated to communicate in order to gain information, get to know one another, better understand our situation or context, come to know ourselves and our role or identity, and meet our fundamental interpersonal needs.

Exercises

1. Consider your life in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. To what degree do you feel you have attained the different levels in the hierarchy? Two or three years ago, were you at the same level where you currently are, or has your position in the hierarchy changed? In what ways do you expect it to change in the future? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.

2. Think of someone you have met but do not know very well. What kinds of conversations have you had with this person? How might you expect your conversations to change if you have more opportunities to get better acquainted? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

3. Think of a conversation you have had within the past day. What were the reasons for having that conversation? Can you relate it to the reasons for engaging in conversation listed in Table 1 “Reasons for Engaging in Communication”? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

4. Write a brief paragraph about getting to know someone. Discuss whether, in your experience, it followed the social penetration theory. Share and compare with classmates.
Speaking Ethically and Avoiding Fallacies

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate the importance of ethics as part of the persuasion process.
2. Identify and provide examples of eight common fallacies in persuasive speaking.

What comes to mind when you think of speaking to persuade? Perhaps the idea of persuasion may bring to mind propaganda and issues of manipulation, deception, intentional bias, bribery, and even coercion. Each element relates to persuasion, but in distinct ways. In a democratic society, we would hope that our Bill of Rights is intact and validated, and that we would support the exercise of freedom to discuss, consider and debate issues when considering change. We can recognize that each of these elements in some ways has a negative connotation associated with it. Why do you think that deceiving your audience, bribing a judge, or coercing people to do something against their wishes is wrong? These tactics violate our sense of fairness, freedom, and ethics.

Manipulation involves the management of facts, ideas or points of view to play upon inherent insecurities or emotional appeals to one's own advantage. Your audience expects you to treat them with respect, and deliberately manipulating them by means of fear, guilt, duty, or a relationship is unethical. In the same way, deception involves the use of lies, partial truths, or the omission of relevant information to deceive your audience. No one likes to be lied to, or made to believe something that is not true. Deception can involve intentional bias, or the selection of information to support your position while framing negatively any information that might challenge your belief.

Bribery involves the giving of something in return for an expected favor, consideration, or privilege. It circumvents the normal protocol for personal gain, and again is a strategy that misleads your audience. Coercion is the use of power to compel action. You make someone do something they would not choose to do freely. You might threaten punishment, and people may go along with you while the “stick” is present, but once the threat is removed, they will revert to their previous position, often with new antagonism toward the person or agency that coerced them. While you may raise the issue that the ends justify the means, and you are “doing it for the audience's own good,” recognize the unethical nature of coercion.

As Martin Luther King Jr. stated in his advocacy of nonviolent resistance, two wrongs do not make a right. They are just two wrongs and violate the ethics that contribute to community and healthy relationships. Each issue certainly relates to persuasion, but you as the speaker should be aware of each in order to present an ethical persuasive speech. Learn to recognize when others try to use these tactics on you, and know that your audience will be watching to see if you try any of these strategies on them.

Eleven Points for Speaking Ethically

In his book Ethics in Human Communication (Johannesen, R., 1996), Richard Johannesen offers eleven points to consider when speaking to persuade. His main points reiterate many of the points across this chapter and should be kept in mind as you prepare, and present, your persuasive message.

Do not:

- use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims.
- intentionally use unsupported, misleading, or illogical reasoning.
- represent yourself as informed or an “expert” on a subject when you are not.
- use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand.
- ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it is actually not related.
- deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, by concealing self-interest, by concealing the group you represent, or by concealing your position as an advocate of a viewpoint.
- distort, hide, or misrepresent the number, scope, intensity, or undesirable features of consequences or effects.
- use “emotional appeals” that lack a supporting basis of evidence or reasoning.
- oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic, two-valued, either-or, polar views or choices.
- pretend certainty where tentativeness and degrees of probability would be more accurate.
- advocate something which you yourself do not believe in.

Aristotle said the mark of a good person, well spoken was a clear command of the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. He discussed the idea of perceiving the many points of view related to a topic, and their thoughtful consideration. While it's important to be able to perceive the complexity of a case, you are not asked to be a lawyer defending a client.

In your speech to persuade, consider honesty and integrity as you assemble your arguments. Your audience will appreciate your thoughtful consideration of more than one view, your understanding of the complexity, and you will build your ethos, or credibility, as you present. Be careful not to stretch the facts, or assemble them only to prove yourself, and instead prove the argument on its own merits. Deception, coercion, intentional bias, manipulation and bribery have no place in your speech to persuade.

Avoiding Fallacies

Fallacies are another way of saying false logic. These rhetorical tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your speech in terms of substance and can actually detract from your effectiveness. There are several techniques or “tricks” that allow the speaker to rely on style without offering substantive argument, to obscure the central message, or twist the facts to their own gain. Here we will examine the eight classical fallacies. You may note that some of them relate to the ethical cautions listed earlier in this section. Eight common fallacies are presented in Table 5 “Fallacies”. Learn to recognize these fallacies so they can't be used against you, and so that you can avoid using them with your audience.

Table 5 Fallacies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fallacy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Red Herring</td>
<td>Any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue, particularly by relating the issue to a common fear.</td>
<td>It's not just about the death penalty; it's about the victims and their rights. You wouldn't want to be a victim, but if you were, you'd want justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Straw Man</td>
<td>A weak argument set up to be easily refuted, distracting attention from stronger arguments</td>
<td>What if we released criminals who commit murder after just a few years of rehabilitation? Think of how unsafe our streets would be then!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Begging the Question</td>
<td>Claiming the truth of the very matter in question, as if it were already an obvious conclusion.</td>
<td>We know that they will be released and unleashed on society to repeat their crimes again and again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Circular Argument</td>
<td>The proposition is used to prove itself. Assumes the very thing it aims to prove. Related to begging the question.</td>
<td>Once a killer, always a killer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ad Populum</td>
<td>Appeals to a common belief of some people, often prejudicial, and states everyone holds this belief. Also called the Bandwagon Fallacy, as people “jump on the bandwagon” of a perceived popular view.</td>
<td>Most people would prefer to get rid of a few “bad apples” and keep our streets safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ad Hominem</td>
<td>“Argument against the man” instead of against his message. Stating that someone's argument is wrong solely because of something about the person rather than about the argument itself.</td>
<td>Our representative is a drunk and philanderer. How can we trust him on the issues of safety and family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Non Sequitur</td>
<td>“It does not follow.” The conclusion does not follow from the premises. They are not related.</td>
<td>Since the liberal antiwar demonstrations of the 1960s, we’ve seen an increase in convicts who got let off death row.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc</td>
<td>“After this, therefore because of this,” also called a coincidental correlation. It tries to establish a cause-and-effect relationship where only a correlation exists.</td>
<td>Violent death rates went down once they started publicizing executions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoid false logic and make a strong case or argument for your proposition. Finally, here is a five-step motivational checklist to keep in mind as you bring it all together:

1. Get their attention
2. Identify the need
3. Satisfy the need
4. Present a vision or solution
5. Take action

This simple organizational pattern can help you focus on the basic elements of a persuasive message when time is short and your performance is critical.

**Key Takeaway**

Speaking to persuade should not involve manipulation, coercion, false logic, or other unethical techniques.
Exercises

1. Can persuasion be ethical? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.
2. Select a persuasive article or video from a Web site that you feel uses unethical techniques to persuade the audience. What techniques are being used? What makes them unethical? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
3. Find an example of a particularly effective scene where a character in your favorite television program is persuaded to believe or do something. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of the scene and why it was effective. Share and compare with classmates.
4. Find an example of a particularly ineffective scene where a character in your favorite television program is not persuaded to believe or do something. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of the scene and why it was ineffective. Share and compare with classmates.
5. Find an example of a fallacy in an advertisement and share it with the class.
6. Find an example of an effective argument in an advertisement and share it with the class.
7. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of a persuasive message that caused you to believe or do something. Share and compare your description with classmates.
Elevator Speech

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the basic parts of an elevator speech.
2. Create an effective elevator speech.

An elevator speech is to oral communication what a Twitter message (limited to 140 characters) is to written communication. It has to engage and interest the listener, inform and/or persuade, and be memorable (Howell, L., 2006). An elevator speech is a presentation that persuades the listener in less than thirty seconds, or around a hundred words. It takes its name from the idea that in a short elevator ride (of perhaps ten floors), carefully chosen words can make a difference. In addition to actual conversations taking place during elevator rides, other common examples include the following:

- An entrepreneur making a brief presentation to a venture capitalist or investor
- A conversation at the water cooler
- Comments during intermission at a basketball game
- A conversation as you stroll across the parking lot

Creating an Elevator Speech

An elevator speech does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. An elevator speech is not a full sales pitch and should not get bloated with too much information. The idea is not to rattle off as much information as possible in a short time, nor to present a “canned” thirty-second advertising message, but rather to give a relaxed and genuine “nutshell” summary of one main idea. The speech can be generic and nonspecific to the audience or listener, but the more you know about your audience, the better. When you tailor your message to that audience, you zero in on your target and increase your effectiveness (Albertson, E., 2008). The emphasis is on brevity, but a good elevator speech will address several key questions:

1. What is the topic, product or service?
2. Who are you?
3. Who is the target market? (if applicable)
4. What is the revenue model? (if applicable)
5. What or who is the competition and what are your advantages?

Table 7 “Parts of an Elevator Speech” adapts the five parts of a speech to the format of the elevator speech.

Table 7 Parts of an Elevator Speech

<p>| 125 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Component</th>
<th>Adapted to Elevator Speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention Statement</td>
<td>Hook + information about you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>What you offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Benefits; what's in it for the listener</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Example that sums it up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual Message</td>
<td>Call for action</td>
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Example:

1. How are you doing?
2. Great! Glad you asked. I'm with (X Company) and we just received this new (product x)—it is amazing. It beats the competition hands down for a third of the price. Smaller, faster, and less expensive make it a winner. It's already a sales leader. Hey, if you know anyone who might be interested, call me! (Hands business card to the listener as visual aid)

Key Takeaway

You often don't know when opportunity to inform or persuade will present itself, but with an elevator speech, you are prepared!

Exercises

1. Pick a product or service and prepare an elevator speech (less than a hundred words, no more than thirty seconds). Rehearse the draft out loud to see how it sounds and post or present it in class.
2. Find an example of an elevator speech online (YouTube, for example) and review it. Post the link and a brief summary of strengths and weaknesses. Share and compare with classmates.
3. Prepare an elevator speech (no more than thirty seconds) and present to the class.

References

9. Inattentional Blindness

From the Noba Project

By Daniel Simons

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

We think important objects and events in our world will automatically grab our attention, but they often don't, particularly when our attention is focused on something else. The failure to notice unexpected objects or events when attention is focused elsewhere is now known as inattentional blindness. The study of such failures of awareness has a long history, but their practical importance has received increasing attention over the past decade. This module describes the history and status of research on inattentional blindness, discusses the reasons why we find these results to be counterintuitive, and the implications of failures of awareness for how we see and act in our world.

- PDF Download
  
  Key terms:
  
  - Attention
  - Awareness
  - Cocktail party effect
  - Focused attention
  - Inattentional blindness
  - Inattentional deafness
  - Individual differences
  - Selective listening
  - Selective looking

Learning Objectives

- Learn about inattentional blindness and why it occurs.
- Identify ways in which failures of awareness are counterintuitive.
- Better understand the link between focused attention and failures of awareness.

Do you regularly spot editing errors in movies? Can you multitask effectively, texting while talking with your friends or watching television? Are you fully aware of your surroundings? If you answered yes to any of those questions, you're not alone. And, you're most likely wrong. More than 50 years ago, experimental psychologists began documenting the many ways that our perception of the world is limited, not by our eyes and ears, but by our minds. We appear able to process only one stream of information at a time, effectively filtering other information from awareness. To a large extent, we perceive only that which receives the focus of our cognitive efforts: our attention.
Imagine the following task, known as **dichotic listening** (e.g., Cherry, 1953; Moray, 1959; Treisman, 1960): You put on a set of headphones that play two completely different speech streams, one to your left ear and one to your right ear. Your task is to repeat each syllable spoken into your left ear as quickly and accurately as possible, mimicking each sound as you hear it. When performing this attention-demanding task, you won’t notice if the speaker in your right ear switches to a different language or is replaced by a different speaker with a similar voice. You won’t notice if the content of their speech becomes nonsensical. In effect, you are deaf to the substance of the ignored speech. But, that is not because of the limits of your auditory senses. It is a form of cognitive deafness, due to the nature of focused, selective attention. Even if the speaker on your right headphone says your name, you will notice it only about one-third of the time (Conway, Cowan, & Bunting, 2001).

And, at least by some accounts, you only notice it that often because you still devote some of your limited attention to the ignored speech stream (Holendar, 1986). In this task, you will tend to notice only large physical changes (e.g., a switch from a male to a female speaker), but not substantive ones, except in rare cases.

**This selective listening task** highlights the power of attention to filter extraneous information from awareness while letting in only those elements of our world that we want to hear. Focused attention is crucial to our powers of observation, making it possible for us to zero in on what we want to see or hear while filtering out irrelevant distractions. But, it has consequences as well: We can miss what would otherwise be obvious and important signals.

The same pattern holds for vision. In a groundbreaking series of studies in the 1970s and early 1980s, Neisser and his colleagues devised a visual analogue of the dichotic listening task (Neisser & Becklen, 1975). Their subjects viewed a video of two distinct, but partially transparent and overlapping, events. For example, one event might involve two people playing a hand-clapping game and the other might show people passing a ball. Because the two events were partially transparent and overlapping, both produced sensory signals on the retina regardless of which event received the participant's attention. When participants were asked to monitor one of the events by counting the number of times the actors performed an action (e.g., hand clapping or completed passes), they often failed to notice unexpected events in the ignored video stream (e.g., the hand-clapping players stopping their game and shaking hands). As for dichotic listening, the participants were unaware of events happening outside the focus of their attention, even when looking right at them. They could tell that other “stuff” was happening on the screen, but many were unaware of the meaning or substance of that stuff.
Have you ever been paying attention to something so closely you missed another event in the background? Or have you ever been so used to seeing something a certain way that when it changed, you didn’t even notice it had? [Image: Tilde Ann Thurium, https://goo.gl/pbl6fQ, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, https://goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

To test the power of selective attention to induce failures of awareness, Neisser and colleagues (Neisser, 1979) designed a variant of this task in which participants watched a video of two teams of players, one wearing white shirts and one wearing black shirts. Subjects were asked to press a key whenever the players in white successfully passed a ball, but to ignore the players in black. As for the other videos, the teams were filmed separately and then superimposed so that they literally occupied the same space (they were partially transparent). Partway through the video, a person wearing a raincoat and carrying an umbrella strolled through the scene. People were so intently focused on spotting passes that they often missed the “umbrella woman.” (Pro tip: If you look closely at the video, you’ll see that Ulric Neisser plays on both the black and white teams.)

These surprising findings were well known in the field, but for decades, researchers dismissed their implications because the displays had such an odd, ghostly appearance. Of course, we would notice if the displays were fully opaque and vivid rather than partly transparent and grainy. Surprisingly, no studies were built on Neisser's method for nearly 20 years. Inspired by these counterintuitive findings and after discussing them with Neisser himself, Christopher Chabris and I revisited them in the late 1990s (Simons & Chabris, 1999). We replicated Neisser's work, again finding that many people missed the umbrella woman when all of the actors in the video were partially transparent and occupying the same space. But, we added another wrinkle: a version of the video in which all of the actions of both teams of players were choreographed and filmed with a single camera. The players moved in and around each other and were fully visible. In the most dramatic version, we had a woman in a gorilla suit walk into the scene, stop to face the camera, thump her chest, and then walk off the other side after nine seconds on screen. Fully half the observers missed the gorilla when counting passes by the team in white.

This phenomenon is now known as inattentional blindness, the surprising failure to notice an unexpected object or event when attention is focused on something else (Mack & Rock, 1998). The past 15 years has seen a surge of interest in such failures of awareness, and we have a better handle on the factors that cause people to miss unexpected events as well as the range of situations in which inattentional blindness occurs. People are much more likely to notice unexpected objects that share features with the attended items in a display (Most et al., 2001). For example, if you count passes by the players wearing black, you are more likely to notice the gorilla than if you count passes by the players wearing white because the color of the gorilla more closely matches that of the black-shirted players (Simons & Chabris, 1999). However, even unique items can go unnoticed. In one task, people monitored black shapes and ignored white shapes that moved around a computer window (Most et al., 2001). Approximately 30 percent of them failed to detect the bright red cross traversing the display, even though it was the only colored item and was visible for five seconds.

Another crucial influence on noticing is the effort you put into the attention-demanding task. If you have to keep separate counts of bounce passes and aerial passes, you are less likely to notice the gorilla (Simons & Chabris, 1999), and if you are tracking faster moving objects, you are less likely to notice (Simons & Jensen, 2009). You can even miss unexpected visual objects when you devote your limited cognitive resources to a memory task (Fougnie & Marois, 2007), so the limits are not purely visual. Instead, they appear to reflect limits on the capacity of attention. Without attention to the unexpected event, you are unlikely to become aware of it (Mack & Rock, 1998; Most, Scholl, Clifford, & Simons, 2005).
In a recent study, Chabris, Weinberger, Fontaine, and Simons (2011) simulated a famous police misconduct case in which a Boston police officer was convicted of lying because he claimed not to have seen a brutal beating (Lehr, 2009). At the time, he had been chasing a murder suspect and ran right past a simulated fight scene. In Chabris’ simulation, subjects jogged behind an experimenter who ran right past a simulated fight scene. At night, 65 percent missed the fight scene. Even during broad daylight, 44 percent of observers jogged right past it without noticing, lending some plausibility to the Boston cop’s story that he was telling the truth and never saw the beating.

Perhaps more importantly, auditory distractions can induce real-world failures to see. In a dramatic illustration of cell phone–induced inattentional blindness, Ira Hyman observed that people talking on a cell phone as they walked across a college campus were less likely than other pedestrians to notice a unicycling clown who rode across their path (Hyman, Boss, Wise, McKenzie, & Caggiano, 2011).

Recently, the study of this sort of awareness failure has returned to its roots in studies of listening, with studies documenting inattentional deafness: When listening to a set of spatially localized conversations over headphones, people often fail to notice the voice of a person walking through the scene repeatedly stating “I am a gorilla” (Dalton & Fraenkel, 2012). Under conditions of focused attention, we see and hear far less of the unattended information than we might expect (Macdonald & Lavie, 2011; Wayand, Levin, & Varakin, 2005).

Thus, the greater the demands on attention, the less likely people are to notice objects falling outside their attention (Macdonald & Lavie, 2011; Simons & Chabris, 1999; Simons & Jensen, 2009). The more like the ignored elements of a scene, the less likely people are to notice. And, the more distracted we are, the less likely we are to be aware of our surroundings. Under conditions of distraction, we effectively develop tunnel vision.

Despite this growing understanding of the limits of attention and the factors that lead to more or less noticing, we have relatively less understanding of individual differences in noticing (Simons & Jensen, 2009). Do some people consistently notice the unexpected while others are obliviously unaware of their surroundings? Or, are we all subject to inattentional blindness due to structural limits on the nature of attention? The question remains controversial. A few studies suggest that those people who have a greater working memory capacity are more likely to notice unexpected objects (Hannon & Richards, 2010; Richards, Hannon, & Derakshan, 2010). In effect, those who have more resources available when focusing attention are more likely to spot other aspects of their world. However, other studies find no such relationship: Those with greater working memory capacity are not any more likely to spot an unexpected object or event (Seegmiller, Watson, & Strayer, 2011; Bredemeier & Simons, 2012). There are theoretical reasons to predict each pattern. With more resources available, people should be more likely to notice (see Macdonald & Lavie, 2001). However, people with greater working memory capacity also tend to be better able to maintain their focus on their prescribed task, meaning that they should be less likely to notice. At least one study suggests that the ability to perform a task does not predict the likelihood of noticing (Simons & Jensen, 2009; for a replication, see Bredemeier & Simons, 2012). In a study I conducted with Melinda Jensen, we measured how well people could track moving objects around a display, gradually increasing the speed until people reached a level of 75% accuracy. Tracking ability varied greatly: Some people could track objects at more than twice the speed others could. Yet, the ability to track objects more easily was unrelated to the odds of noticing an unexpected event. Apparently, as long as people try to perform the tracking task, they are relatively unlikely to notice unexpected events.
Given the limits on attention coupled with our mistaken impression that important events will capture our attention, how has our species survived? Why weren’t our ancestors eaten by unexpected predators? One reason is that our ability to focus attention intently might have been more evolutionarily useful than the ability to notice unexpected events. After all, for an event to be unexpected, it must occur relatively infrequently. Moreover, most events don’t require our immediate attention, so if inattentive blindness delays our ability to notice the events, the consequences could well be minimal. In a social context, others might notice that event and call attention to it. Although inattentive blindness might have had minimal consequences over the course of our evolutionary history, it does have consequences now.

At pedestrian speeds and with minimal distraction, inattentive blindness might not matter for survival. But in modern society, we face greater distractions and move at greater speeds, and even a minor delay in noticing something unexpected can mean the difference between a fender-bender and a lethal collision. If talking on a phone increases your odds of missing a unicycling clown, it likely also increases your odds of missing the child who runs into the street or the car that runs a red light. Why, then, do people continue to talk on the phone when driving? The reason might well be the same mistaken intuition that makes inattentive blindness surprising: Drivers simply do not notice how distracted they are when they are talking on a phone, so they believe they can drive just as well when talking on a phone even though they can’t (Strayer & Johnston, 2001).

So, what can you do about inattentive blindness? The short answer appears to be, “not much.” There is no magical elixir that will overcome the limits on attention, allowing you to notice everything (and that would not be a good outcome anyway). But, there is something you can do to mitigate the consequences of such limits. Now that you know about inattentive blindness, you can take steps to limit its impact by recognizing how your intuitions will lead you astray.

First, maximize the attention you do have available by avoiding distractions, especially under conditions for which an unexpected event might be catastrophic. The ring of a new call or the ding of a new text are hard to resist, so make it impossible to succumb to the temptation by turning your phone off or putting it somewhere out of reach when you are driving. If you know that you will be tempted and you know that using your phone will increase inattentive blindness, you must be proactive. Second, pay attention to what others might not notice. If you are a bicyclist, don’t assume that the driver sees you, even if they appear to make eye contact. Looking is not the same as seeing. Only by understanding the limits of attention and by recognizing our mistaken beliefs about what we “know” to be true can we avoid the modern-day consequences of those limits.

Discussion Questions

1. Many people, upon learning about inattentive blindness, try to think of ways to eliminate it, allowing themselves
complete situation awareness. Why might we be far worse off if we were not subject to inattentional blindness?

2. If inattentional blindness cannot be eliminated, what steps might you take to avoid its consequences?

3. Can you think of situations in which inattentional blindness is highly likely to be a problem? Can you think of cases in which inattentional blindness would not have much of an impact?

Vocabulary

**Dichotic listening**
A task in which different audio streams are presented to each ear. Typically, people are asked to monitor one stream while ignoring the other.

**Inattentional blindness**
The failure to notice a fully visible, but unexpected, object or event when attention is devoted to something else.

**Inattentional deafness**
The auditory analog of inattentional blindness. People fail to notice an unexpected sound or voice when attention is devoted to other aspects of a scene.

**Selective listening**
A method for studying selective attention in which people focus attention on one auditory stream of information while deliberately ignoring other auditory information.

Outside Resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjpLPnRrakc

References


Authors

• Daniel Simons

Daniel Simons, Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois, received the APA Early Career Award for his work on change blindness and attention. He is best known for his work on the limits of attention and awareness and for co-authoring the NY Times bestseller, The Invisible Gorilla.
Groups and meetings

Once I ran across something in a book that really agitated me. The volume presented lists of ideas for living a happy and fulfilled life. One of the lists was headed “Five Great Ways to Find a Friend.” Its first four ideas were to find a cause, find a church, find a class, and find a club. All those ideas seemed reasonable to me. Recommendation #5, however, was “find a committee.” When I saw this, I immediately asked myself, “What were the authors of this book eating, drinking, or smoking when they wrote this? Who with more sense than a pencil eraser would suggest actually LOOKING FOR A COMMITTEE TO JOIN for any reason whatsoever?”

-Phil Venditti

Meetings?!

Source: http://www.codinghorror.com/blog/2012/02/meetings-where-work-goes-to-die.html

Getting Started

In education, business, and the military meetings dominate the way many groups operate in American society. Estimates of the number of meetings that take place every day in our country range from 11 million to more than 30 million¹. One authority claims that the average chief executive officer spends 17 hours per week in meetings, whereas the average senior executive spends 23 hours per week ².

If the average number of people in each of these meetings is only five and the average meeting lasts only one hour, this means that between 55,000,000 and 150,000,000 person-hours each day are being consumed by meetings. Assuming a
50-week work year, then, the total time devoted to meetings each year amounts to at least fifteen billion person-hours. As for you, yourself, one estimate is that you’ll spend 35–50% of every workweek in meetings, for a total of more than 9,000 hours over the course of your lifetime.

If meetings are so central to what groups do, and so time-consuming, it makes sense to pay attention to how they’re conducted. Like any other course of action, the process of engaging in meetings has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In our first section we’ll consider the beginning—the planning part. Later we’ll look at techniques for facilitating a meeting, the use of Robert’s Rules of Order, and the best ways to follow up after a meeting.

WHAT ARE MEETINGS FOR?

Office equipment and supplies constitute tools to support the work of most modern groups such as student teams in college classes, employees and executives in businesses, and collections of people in other organizations. None of those groups would say, however, that using copy machines and staplers is one of their goals. And none of them would visit a copy machine unless they had something they needed to reproduce. They wouldn’t grab a stapler, either, unless they had some papers to attach to each other.

Meetings resemble office supplies in at least one way: they can help a group accomplish its goals. But meetings are like office supplies in another way, too: they’re only a means toward reaching group goals, not an end in themselves. And sometimes they’re even antithetical to the efficient functioning of a group. One statistical analysis of workers’ reactions to meetings discovered a significant positive relationship between the number of meetings attended and both the level of fatigue and the sensation of being subjected to a heavy work load.

When deciding if you should meet, first consider if the group is operating well. The group probably adopted goals for itself. It may even have ranked those goals in order of importance. Members of a student team might, for example, decide that their joint goals are to earn a high grade on their group project, to have fun together, and to ensure that all of them can secure a positive recommendation from the instructor when they look for a job after graduation.

“To meet” is not one of the goals of any group, though, is it? Of course not, your goals involve doing things, not meeting—not even meeting to decide what you’re going to do and whether you’re doing it. You should not meet until and unless doing so clearly contributes to a goal of your group.

Meetings which aren’t part of an official, ongoing series should be conducted only if the people who would be participating agree that having the meetings is necessary to answer a question, solve a problem, make a decision, or ensure that people know what it is they are and should be doing.

If you’re in a position to decide whether and when a meeting will take place, you’re in control of what some might consider other people’s most valuable possession: their time. If you take this responsibility seriously and act on it wisely, your fellow group members will appreciate it—especially since many group leaders don’t do so.
To Meet or Not to Meet

“Lifehacker” suggests that you follow these steps before scheduling in-person meetings:

1. Get done what you can by email. If email doesn't accomplish your aims, use the telephone. Only if neither email nor the phone works should you meet face to face.
2. Calculate the opportunity cost of a potential meeting. What task(s) that you could be engaged in at the time of the meeting will you have to postpone, or forgo entirely, because of the meeting? Is it worth it?
3. Ask yourself what bad results, if any, will come to pass if you don’t meet. What about if you don't meet this time, but later instead? If the bad things which you expect to arise if you don't meet are minimal or can be dealt with easily, don't meet, or at least not now.
4. Ask if it’s essential for everyone in the group to be at the same physical location at the time of the meeting. Assess whether the chore of just moving people's molecules from one place to another could render a face-to-face meeting undesirable.

If it’s “to Meet,” Then What?

Once you’ve decided that you should hold a meeting of some sort, you should do your best to make sure it will run well. Part of this undertaking is to ensure that all the members of your group understand the significance of the time they'll be devoting to getting together. To this end, you may want to create a list of basic obligations you feel everyone should fulfill with respect to all meetings. These obligations might include the following items:

• If you can't make it to a meeting, let the person who's organizing it know in a timely fashion. If you were expected to make a report or complete a task of some sort by the time of the meeting, either submit the report through someone else who will be there or inform the organizer of when you'll finish what you're committed to be doing. If you can find someone to fill in for you at the meeting, do it.
• If you can attend the meeting, prepare for it. Read meeting announcements and agendas. Take necessary and appropriate information and tools with you to each meeting. Come to meetings with an open mind and with a mental picture of what you may contribute to the discussion.
• Pay attention. Avoid side conversations or other actions that might keep you from understanding what's going on in a meeting.
• Be clear and concise. Seek parsimonious discourse. Don't speak unless you're sure you'll improve over silence by doing so.
• Wait to express your own opinion until you're sure you understand others' views.
• Challenge assumptions, but stick to the topic and offer constructive rather than destructive criticism.
• Know when to give in on a matter of disagreement. Stick to your convictions, but consider carefully whether you need to have your way in any particular situation.

Guidelines for Planning a Meeting

Again, first of all: don't meet at all unless you need to. Once you've determined that a meeting will promote rather than hinder productivity, preparing for it well will give you a head start on maximizing its effectiveness.

Here are six guidelines to take into account as you plan a meeting:
1. **Identify the specific goals.**

   Identify the specific goals you plan to achieve in the meeting and the methods you'll use to decide if you've achieved them. Write the goals down. Reread them. Let them sit a while. Read them again to see if they're still appropriate and necessary.

   If the goals of the meeting still look as though they're all valuable, remember Dwight Eisenhower's dictum that "What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important." If you're not sure you can get everything done that you hope to in the time you'll have available, set priorities so that the most urgent items are taken care of quickly and you can postpone others without endangering what's most important to get done.

2. **Decide carefully who needs to attend.**

   At one point, Amazon Corporation implemented a "two-pizza guideline" whereby it limited the number of people who composed its teams to the quantity that could be fed with two pizzas. If you calculate that the people you plan to invite to your meeting constitute larger than a two-pizza group, ask yourself if all of them really, really, really need to be there.

3. **Produce a clear, brief, thorough, informative agenda.**

   Don't spring surprises on people. To give them a solid idea of what to expect, divide the meeting's agenda into simple categories. For example, establishment the following: quorum; approval of minutes and the agenda; officers' and (sub)committee reports; unfinished business; new business, and "other."

   For each item, name the individual in charge of it, indicate whether it will require action by the group, and provide an estimated duration. (You'll need to confirm these estimates with the responsible parties, of course). If you expect some or all of the group's members to complete a task before they arrive, such as reading a report or generating possible solutions to a problem, tell them so clearly.

   Here's a special note, too: **Don't plan to stretch the contents of a meeting to fit a preordained time.** Strive to cut down on how long you spend to handle each item on your agenda as much as you can so that members of your
group can get back to their other responsibilities as soon as possible. A shorter-than-expected meeting is usually a thing of joy.

4. **Pick a good venue.**

If you have a choice, plan to gather in a place with plenty of light, comfortable furniture, and a minimum of distracting sounds or sights. You should be able to adjust the temperature, too, if people get too hot or cold. Make sure that any technological tools you think will be available to you are actually going to be on hand when you meet and that they're all functioning. Even if you expect to have access to a laptop computer and a projector, plan to bring a flip chart and markers so that people will be able to express and record ideas spontaneously during the meeting. And all other things being equal, find a place to meet regularly which is large enough and secure enough to allow your group members to store the “tools of their trade” there—flipcharts, writing supplies, reference books, etc.—between gatherings.

5. **Make sure the participants receive the agenda.**

Make sure people receive the agenda you've prepared in a timely fashion so they'll know why, when, where, and for how long the group is expected to meet. Two reminders per meeting may be enough—one by letter and one by e-mail, for instance—but three are better, including one the day before the meeting itself. Free computer-based confidential text-messaging services such as Class Parrot ([http://classparrot.com/](http://classparrot.com/)) and kikutext ([https://kikutext.com/](https://kikutext.com/)) can provide another channel for reaching group members.

One college president from a Southern state maintained that he'd gotten his board of trustees to act “like trained seals,” partly through thorough preparation for their meetings. In fact, the president actually ran practice meetings with the board to make sure there would be no surprises when the real meetings took place. You should practice, too, at gently, repeatedly, and clearly notifying other group members of the time and agenda of each meeting. For every person who thinks you're being repetitive, two or three will thank you for keeping them from overlooking the meeting.

If you're planning to meet in a place for the first time, or if you're expecting someone to attend your meeting for the first time, be sure to provide clear and complete directions to the location. With online tools such as mapquest.com and google maps at your disposal, it should cost you very little time to locate such directions and send them to members of your group.

6. **Arrive early.**

Arrive early to size up and set up the place where you're meeting. Rooms sometimes get double-booked, furniture sometimes gets rearranged, technological tools such as LCD projectors and laptop computers sometimes break down or get taken away to be repaired, and so on and on. If you're the person in charge of leading the meeting, you need to know first if unexpected happenings like these have taken place.
Following these half-dozen guidelines won't guarantee that your meetings will be as successful as you wish them to be. If you don't heed them, however, you're apt to encounter considerable difficulty in achieving that aim.

EXERCISES

1. Identify a group of which you're a member. What percentage of its meetings in the past year do you feel contributed significantly to its stated objectives? What role did pre-meeting planning play in producing that outcome?
2. Think about a time when a group you were part of canceled or postponed a meeting. On what grounds did it reach that decision? Why do you approve or disapprove of the decision?
3. What do you consider to be the pros and cons of limiting the number of people invited to a group meeting?
4. Describe for a classmate your ideal venue for a group meeting. What equipment, amenities, and other provisions do you feel would best assist a group to achieve the aims of its meetings?

Facilitating a Meeting

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe features of a poorly-facilitated group meeting
2. Identify guidelines for facilitating a meeting effectively.
3. Discuss steps for facilitating virtual meetings.

Preparing well for group meetings takes you a third of the way toward ensuring their productivity, and follow-up takes care of another third. The middle third of the process is to run the meetings efficiently. Facilitating a meeting requires care, vigilance, flexibility, resilience, humility, and humor. In a way, to run a meeting effectively calls someone to act the way a skilled athletic coach does, watching the action, calling plays, and encouraging good performance. Furthermore, you need to monitor the interaction of everyone around you and “call the plays” based on a game plan that you and your fellow group members have presumably agreed upon in advance. Finally, like a coach, you sometimes need to call timeouts—breaks—when people are weary or the action is starting to get raggedy or undisciplined.

A Meeting Heroine

We will list and explain several principles and practices of good meeting facilitation in this section, but first let’s consider a friend and colleague of ours named Bonnie. Bonnie is the best meeting facilitator we’ve ever met, for several reasons. First of all, she makes it a point to become familiar with not only the issues and topics to be dealt with in a meeting, but also the personalities, strengths, and foibles of the other people who will be participating. Although she behaves in a warm and friendly manner at all times during a meeting, she never veers off into extraneous or superfluous details just for the sake of being sociable.

Because she attends closely to every interaction in a meeting and takes the time in advance to become familiar with the styles and proclivities of participants, Bonnie prevents discussions from getting off track. In fact, she has an uncanny knack of being able to spot a train of discussion that might even just be getting ready to go off track so that she can nudge it safely around bends and down slippery slopes. Furthermore, she seems to always know exactly what
questions to ask, and to whom, to elicit concise, purposeful information which helps the group keep moving in the proper direction.

Bonnie is totally efficient and systematic in her pacing and wastes no time from the moment a meeting begins to the moment it ends...or afterward, either. If you go to a meeting led by Bonnie and its purpose is to plan an event—an Arbor Day celebration, for example, since that's a project she oversees every year in the town where she lives—you can be confident of the outcome. When the meeting ends, the event will be planned and you will be feeling good about yourself, about the meeting itself, and about the future of the group.

Perils of Poor Facilitation

Unfortunately, many people lack the skills of our friend Bonnie. As a result, a variety of negative results can take place as they fail to act capably as meeting facilitators. Here are some signs that there's “Trouble in River City” in a meeting:

- An argument starts about an established fact.
- Opinions are introduced as if they were truths.
- People intimidate others with real or imaginary “knowledge.”
- People overwhelm each other with too many proposals for the time available to consider them.
- People become angry for no good reason.
- People promote their own visions at the expense of everyone else's.
- People demand or offer much more information than is needed.
- Discussion becomes circular; people repeat themselves without making any progress toward conclusions.

Guidelines for Facilitating a Meeting

Many authorities have recommended actions and attitudes which can help you facilitate a meeting well. Here are several such suggestions, taken partly from these writers’ works and partly from the authors’ experiences as facilitators and participants in meetings over the years:

1. **Start promptly**
   
   Some time, calculate the cost to your group—even at minimum-wage rates—for the minutes its members sit around waiting for meetings to begin. You may occasionally be delayed for good reasons, but if you're chronically late you'll eventually aggravate folks who've arrived on time—the very ones whose professionalism you'd particularly like to reinforce and praise. Consistently starting on time may even boost morale: “Early in, early out” will probably appeal to most of a group's members, since they are likely to have other things they need to do as soon as a meeting ends.

2. **Begin with something positive.**
   
   Face it: no matter what you do, many people in your group would probably rather be somewhere else than in a meeting. If you'd like them to overcome this familiar aversion and get pumped up about what you'll be doing in a meeting, therefore, you might emulate the practice of City Year, a Boston-based nonprofit international service organization. City Year begins its meetings by inviting members to describe from their own recent life experiences an example of what Robert F. Kennedy referred to as a “ripple of hope.” This could be a good deed they've seen someone do for someone else, a news item about a decline in the crime rate, or perhaps even a loving note they've received from a child or other family member. Sharing with their fellow group members such examples of altruism,
love, or community improvement focuses and motivates City Year members by reminding them in specific, personal terms of why their meetings can be truly worthwhile.

3. **Tend to housekeeping details.**

   People's productivity depends in part on their biological state. Once you convene your meeting, announce or remind the group members of where they can find rest rooms, water fountains, vending machines, designated smoking areas, and any other amenities that may contribute to their physical comfort.

4. **Make sure people understand their roles.**

   At the start of the meeting, review what you understand is going to happen and ask for confirmation of what you think people are expected to do in the time you're going to be spending together. Calling on someone to make a report if he or she isn't aware it's required can be embarrassing for both you and that person.

5. **Keep to your agenda.**

   Social time makes people happy and relieves stress. Most group meetings, however, should not consist primarily of social time. You may want to designate a “sheriff”—rotating the role at each meeting—to watch for departures from the agenda and courteously direct people back on task. Either you or the “sheriff” might want to periodically provide “signposts” indicating where you are in your process, too, such as “It looks like we've got 25 minutes left in our meeting, and we haven't discussed yet who's going to be working on the report to give to Mary.”

   If your meetings habitually exceed the time you allot for them, consider either budgeting more time or, if you want to stick to your guns, setting a kitchen timer to ring when you've reached the point when you've said you'll quit. The co-founder of one technology firm, Jeff Atwood, put together a list of rules for his company's meetings which included this one: “No meeting should ever be more than an hour, under penalty of death.” Similarly, the library staff at one college in the Midwest conducts all their meetings standing up in a circle, which encourages brevity and efficiency.

6. **Guide, don’t dictate.**

   If you're in charge of the meeting, that doesn't mean you're responsible for everything people say in it, nor does it mean you have to personally comment on every idea or proposal that comes up. Let the other members of the group carry the content as long as they're not straying from the process you feel needs to be followed.

   You may see that some people regularly dominate discussion in your group's meetings and that others are perhaps slower to talk despite having important contributions to make. One way to deal with these disparities is by providing the group with a “talking stick” and specifying that people must hold it in their hands in order to speak. You could also invoke the “NOSTUESO rule” with respect to the talking stick, which says that “No One Speaks Twice Until Everybody Speaks Once.”

7. **Keep your eyes open for nonverbal communication.**

   As a meeting progresses, people's physical and emotional states are likely to change. As the facilitator, you should do your best to identify such change and accommodate it within the structures and processes your group has established for itself. When people do something as simple as crossing their arms in front of them, for instance, they might be signaling that they're closed to what others are saying—or they might just be trying to stay warm in a room that feels too cold to them.

   When one person in the meeting has the floor and is talking, it's a good idea to watch how the rest of the group seems to be responding. You may notice clues indicating that people are pleased and receptive, or that they're uninterested, skeptical, or even itching to respond negatively. You may want to do a perception check to see if you're interpreting nonverbal cues accurately. For instance, you might say, “Terry, could we pause here a bit? I get the impression that people might have some questions for you.” As an alternative, you might address the whole group and ask “Does anyone have questions for Terry at this point?”

8. **Capture and assign action items.**
Unless they are held purely to communicate information, or for other special purposes, most meetings result in action items, tasks, and other assignments for one or more participants. Sometimes these items arise unexpectedly because someone comes up with a great new idea and volunteers or is assigned to pursue it after the discussion ends. Be on the alert for these elements of a meeting.

9. **Make things fun and healthy.**
   Appeal to people's tummies and funnybones. Provide something to eat or drink, even if it's just coffee or peanuts in a bowl. Glenn Parker and George Hoffman's book on how to run meetings well includes a chapter titled "Eating Well=Meeting Well," and it also refers to the fact that the American Cancer Society offers a program to help groups organize meetings and other events with good health in mind.

10. **Avoid sarcasm and cynicism.**
    Encourage humor and merriment. If your agenda includes some challenging items, try to start out with “quick wins” to warm the mood of the group.

11. **Take breaks regularly, even when you think you don’t need them.**
    If you've ever gone on a long hike on a beautiful day, you may have decided to continue a mile or two beyond your original intended destination because the scenery was beautiful and you were feeling spunky. If you're like the authors, though, you probably regretted "going the extra mile" later because it meant you had to go back that mile plus all the rest of the way you'd come.
    Something similar can arise in a meeting. People sometimes feel full of energy and clamor to keep a lively discussion going past the time scheduled for a break, but they may not realize that they're tiring and losing focus until someone says or does something ill-advised. Taking even five-minute breathers at set intervals can help group members remain physically refreshed over the long haul.

12. **Show respect for everyone.**
    Seek consensus. Avoid “groupthink” by encouraging a free and full airing of opinions. Observe the Golden Rule. Listen sincerely to everyone, but avoid giving a small minority so much clout that in disputed matters “99-to-1 is a tie.” Keep disagreements agreeable. If you must criticize, criticize positions, not people. If someone's behavior shows a pattern of consistently irritating others or disrupting the flow of your group's meetings, talk to the person privately and express your concern in a polite but clear fashion. Be specific in stating what you expect the person to do or stop doing, and keep an open mind to whatever response you receive.

13. **Expect the unexpected.**
    Do your best to anticipate and prepare for confrontations and conflicts. If you didn't already make time to do so earlier, take a minute just before the start of the meeting to mark items on your agenda which you think might turn out to be especially contentious or time-consuming.

14. **Conduct multiple assessments of the meeting.**
    **Formative assessment** takes place during an activity and allows people to modify their behavior in response to its results. Why not perform a brief interim evaluation during every meeting in which you ask, for instance, "If we were to end this meeting right now, where would it be, and if we need to make changes now in what's happening in our meeting, what should they be?"
    **Summative assessment** is implemented at the end of an activity. When you finish a meeting, for example, you might check to see how well people feel that the gathering met its intended goals. If you want something in writing, you might distribute a half sheet of paper to each person asking “What was best about our meeting?” and “What might have made this meeting better?” Or you could write two columns on a whiteboard, one with a plus and the other with a minus, and ask people orally to identify items they think belong in each category. If you feel a less formal check-up is sufficient, you might just go around the table or room and ask every person for one word that captures how she or he feels.
15. **Think (and talk) ahead.**

   If you didn’t write it on your agenda—which would have been a good idea, most likely—remind group members, before the meeting breaks up, of where and when their next gathering is to take place.

**Tips For Virtual Meetings**

Meetings conducted via Skype or other synchronous technological tools can function as efficiently as face-to-face ones, but only if the distinctive challenges of the virtual environment are taken into account. It’s harder to develop empathy with other people, and easier to engage in unhelpful multitasking, when you’re not in the same physical space with them. To make it more likely that a virtual meeting will be both pleasant and productive, then, it makes sense to tell people up front what your expectations are of their behavior. If you want them to avoid reading email or playing computer solitaire on their computers while the meeting is underway, for example, say so.

A major goal of most meetings is to reach decisions based on maximum involvement, so it pays to keep in mind that people work best with other people whom they know and understand. With this in mind, you might choose to email a photo of each person scheduled to be in the meeting and include a quick biography for everyone to look over in advance. This communication could take place along with disseminating the meeting’s agenda and other supporting documentation.

Here are some further tips and suggestions for leading or participating in virtual meetings, each based on the unique features of such gatherings:

1. Get all the participants in an audio meeting to say something brief at the start of the meeting so that everyone becomes familiar with everyone else’s voice.
2. Remind people of the purpose of the meeting and of the key outcome(s) you hope to achieve together.
3. Listen/watch for people who aren’t participating and ask them periodically if they have thoughts or suggestions to add to the discussion.
4. Summarize the status of the meeting from time to time.
5. If you’re holding an audio conference, discourage people from calling in on a cell phone because of potential problems with sound quality.
6. Because you may not have nonverbal cues to refer to, ask other members to clarify their meanings and intentions if you’re not sure their words alone convey all you need to know.
7. If you know you’re going to have to leave a meeting before it ends, inform the organizer in advance. Sign off publicly, but quickly, when you leave rather than just hanging up on the meeting connection.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

- Facilitating a meeting well requires a large number of skills and talents and depends on overcoming many potential pitfalls, but following specific recommendations from authorities on the subject can make it possible.
EXERCISES

1. Reread the description of Bonnie's abilities. With a partner, list the abilities and rank them in what you feel is their order of importance. Which of the abilities, if any, do you feel are absolutely essential to successful leadership of meetings?

2. Which instances of “Trouble in River City” have you experienced in group meetings? Describe two or three such instances. What action might the group leader have taken to prevent or resolve the episodes?

3. Some cultures value exact punctuality differently from others. If you were leading a series of meetings comprising members of several cultural groups, what steps, if any, would you take to accommodate or modify people's habits and expectations concerning the starting and ending times of the meetings?

4. Imagine that you're the new chairperson of a group which got seriously off track in the first of its meetings that you presided over. You tried gently redirecting people to discuss pertinent issues, but they first ignored and then resisted your attempts. What steps might you take to address the situation?

An Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

The point of following Robert's Rules is civility. That is, the purpose is to preserve order, decorum, and civility so that a group can make wise decisions. RONR allows a group's chairperson to rule people's comments out of order if the comments are irrelevant (not “germane”) or are considered to be personal attacks.

Robert's Rules even makes provisions for group members to avoid direct attack. It attempts to accomplish this by allowing members of a group to refer to each other in the third person—e.g., “the previous speaker” or “the treasurer”—rather than by using each other's names.

Why Parliamentary Procedure?

It's easy to make fun of individuals or groups who follow procedures “to the letter,” especially in a country like the United States where we at least say that we prize spontaneity and self-determination. When it comes to most groups you work in or lead as a student or employee, you'll probably be able to get away with conducting their meetings fairly informally, or even “by the seat of your pants.” In such groups—“among friends,” as it were—parliamentary procedure may seem boring or unnecessary. You may just assume, for instance, that you'll observe the will of the majority in cases of disagreement and that you'll keep track of what you do by taking a few simple notes when you get together.

What about when you are asked to chair your children's PTA, elected president of a community service group, or become
an officer in a professional society? In any of these situations, you will have entered a “deliberative assembly”—a body that considers options and reaches decisions—and you'll benefit from knowing at least the rudiments of parliamentary procedure in order to fulfill your duties within it. When you're in charge of running such a group's meetings, be able to ensure that things run smoothly, efficiently, and fairly.

On a very practical level, parliamentary procedure can help you answer these common, important questions as you lead a meeting:

- Who gets to speak when, and for how long?
- What do we do if our discussion seems to be going on and on without any useful results?
- When and how do we make decisions?
- What do we do if we're not ready yet to say yes or no to a proposal but need to move on to something else in the meantime?
- What do we do if we change our minds?

Learning some parliamentary procedure promises at least two personal benefits, as well. First, you'll probably discover that the structures you become familiar with through using parliamentary procedure boost your confidence in general. Second, you're apt to find that you've laid the foundations for establishing yourself as a solid, reliable leader. Third, although you shouldn't be stricter or more formal than is good for your group, using parliamentary procedure regularly and as a matter of course should contribute to the impression that you care about consistency, equity, and efficiency in your dealings with other people in general.

**Ingredients of Roberts rules**

**Robert's Rules (RONR)** offers guidance for all the essential processes a group is apt to conduct. It suggests that a group select a chairperson (“chairman” in Robert's original language) and a secretary, that it decide on what proportion of its membership constitutes a quorum and is thus able to conduct substantive business, and that it follow at least a “simplified standard order of business” which may be as straightforward as this:

### Robert's Rules Standard Order of Business:

1. **Reading and approval of minutes.** Deciding whether notes of the previous meeting, generally taken by the group's secretary, can be accepted as written or need to be modified.
2. **Reports.** Statements by officers and heads of committees, along with any recommendations associated with them. For instance, the finance committee of a student government association might propose that the association as a whole spend money from a particular budget to send a student representative to a professional conference or purchase new bookkeeping software for the association's treasurer.
3. **Unfinished business.** Some groups use the term “old business” in this part of their agendas and allow members to bring up any topics that have occupied the body's attention throughout its history, but RONR discourages this. Instead, it insists that “unfinished business” be restricted to items which were left incomplete at the conclusion of the previous meeting or which were scheduled to be considered in the previous meeting but could not be because of insufficient time and were therefore specifically postponed to the next one.
4. **New business.** This part of a meeting revolves around motions introduced by members and considered by the group as a whole.
Agendas

Although a bare-bones standard order of business may satisfy the requirements of RONR, most groups decide to make use of an agenda such as the ones we’ve discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. Such agendas, if and when they are approved by groups at the outset of their meetings, may be individualized to name the persons who are to give reports and make recommendations. They may also include timelines that refer to specific topics, offer background information, and say when breaks will take place. RONR recognizes that every group has a personality of its own and should have the flexibility to express that personality through a well-crafted agenda tailored to meet its needs.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR), a thorough and well-established system of parliamentary procedure, can be followed in greater or lesser detail as a group attempts to ensure civility, fairness, and efficiency in the conduct of its business.

EXERCISES

1. Watch a broadcast on C-SPAN television of either the opening of a session of the US House of Representatives or of debate on legislation in the House or Senate. What specialized terms or forms of address did you hear which fit with your understanding of Robert’s Rules of Order? What function did those terms or forms of address fulfill?**
2. Locate a meeting agenda for a student group or employee committee on your campus. To what degree do its contents differ from the simplified standard order of business described in this section? Why do you think the organizers of the meeting modified the standard order as they did?
3. Draft an agenda for a meeting of an imaginary student group and share it with 2-3 fellow students. Explain why you structured your agenda the way you did.

Post Meeting Communication and Minutes

Bookends hold books up. Without them, the books tumble onto each other or off the shelf. The “bookends” of a meeting, likewise, are as important as the meeting itself. Without them, nobody knows beforehand what’s going to happen or remembers afterward what did.
We've discussed the first major bookend of a meeting, its agenda. In this section we'll turn our attention to the kinds of bookends that follow a meeting, including principally its minutes.

One Administrative Tool

A college administrator we know developed a form to give people after any conversation they had in his office, much less a formal meeting. He would take notes on the form of what he and the other people in the conversation said, and especially of what they agreed or disagreed on at the end of their meeting. Then he would share the notes with the other people, make a photocopy for each, and have them all initial their copies. Why? Because the administrator knew that busy people may quickly forget exactly what they decided in a conversation. Our individual impressions of a meeting start changing the moment we leave the site. As one business writer noted, “Even with the ubiquitous tools of organization and sharing ideas...the capacity for misunderstanding is unlimited.”

The Why and How of Minutes

Among the exasperating experiences in group meetings are moments when people say, “We talked about this before—at least twice. Why are we going over the same ground again?” There are also those times when we hear, “John, you were supposed to report on this. What’s your report?” and John replies, “But I didn’t know I was supposed to make a report.”

The way to prevent such deflating episodes is by following up after meetings with good records. Here are two ways to do this:
1. Keep excellent minutes in the meeting. One way to start doing this is to use a template. One college in Washington State has used this template for many years to shape and retain minutes of its academic committee meetings:

   Date/time/location of meeting: ____________________________________
   Purpose/goals of meeting: ____________________________________
   Person presiding: ____________________________________
   Officers in Attendance: ____________________________________
   Other members in attendance: ____________________________________
   Members absent: ____________________________________
   Time of adjournment: ____________________________________
   Date/time/place of next meeting: ____________________________________

Notice that this style of minutes lacks extensive text and “he said/she said” descriptions.

Table 12.1 Agenda Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Discussion/Motions</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approved as printed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roof problem</td>
<td>John Smith reported that the ceiling in the staff washroom leaks. Motion by Mary Jones to have the ceiling repaired; motion passed.</td>
<td>Plant/Maintenance will be asked to patch the leak.</td>
<td>John Smith Maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead, it makes crystal clear who’s responsible for what actions prior to the next meeting. Its contents are brief, easy to read, and very difficult to misinterpret (or evade). It promotes action and accountability.

2. Distribute minutes promptly. When and how you disseminate minutes shows whether and how much you care about what your group does. If your group has bylaws, it may be a good idea for them to include a time frame within which minutes of meetings need to be distributed (such as “within five days”).

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Make sure your mailing list of people to receive minutes is up to date and accurate. This will ensure that no one misses the next meeting because he or she didn’t see when and where it was scheduled to take place.

Professional minutes may even make people who weren’t at a meeting wish they had been. Professional minutes can also strengthen your group’s pride and solidarity.

**EXERCISES**

1. Pay special attention to conversations you carry on over the next several days in school and at home. Pick one of them and write simulated minutes according to the format shown in this section. What did you learn from this process about distilling and summarizing information from oral interactions?

2. Locate a website of an academic, business, or civic organization which includes minutes of a recent meeting by some of its members. Identify portions of the minutes that you feel would enable you as a member of the group to adequately understand an important action taken by the group if you were
unable to attend the meeting. If you were part of the group, what improvements would you make in the format of its minutes to further enhance their effectiveness?

Summary

In this chapter we have reviewed mechanisms and approaches to handling meetings. We have explored the purposes of meetings and discovered that alternatives to meetings can often yield satisfactory results within a group. We have reviewed specific steps in planning, facilitating, and following up after meetings, including the use of Robert's Rules of Order. Meetings play a large role in the life and development of most groups, so acquiring tools for putting meetings to the best possible use can be of great value to their members.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Interpretive Questions

1. Search the website of the Congressional Record at http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=Record&c=III for a legislative topic of your choice and locate 3–4 transcriptions of comments entered into the Record concerning it. What terminology or structure do you see in the text which differs from day-to-day conversational norms? What purposes do you believe these communication features might be intended to serve?

2. If you've participate in a virtual meeting which reached a decision of some sort, what elements of the medium do you feel contributed positively to making the decision? What elements, if any, made it more challenging for you to achieve your aims?

Application Questions

1. Think of a problem at your college that you and some of your fellow students feel needs to be addressed. Imagine that you've been told you have two weeks to present a proposal to the president of the college for remedying the problem. Draft an agenda for as many meetings as you feel would be necessary to involve the proper people in confronting the problem. Describe how the meetings would take place, including what rules you would follow, who would be invited, and what specific items would be dealt with in what sequence.

2. Review the minutes of 3–4 recent meetings of a local governmental agency such as a city council or
parks commission. What portion of the text in each set of minutes, if any, do you feel could be eliminated without diminishing the effectiveness of the documents as records of the meetings? Write up a revised version of one of the sets of minutes which most efficiently conveys what was important in the meeting.

References

1 http://www.studergroup.com/dotCMS/knowledgeAssetDetail?inode=269049
5 Barge, J.K. (1991, November). Task skills and competence in group leadership. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, GA.


Books and Articles


Facilitation at a Glance; Ingrid Bens

A wonderful pocket guide to facilitation, filled with tools and techniques useful to both novice and advanced facilitators. Great set of tools for problem solving.

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making; Sam Kaner

An excellent resource for ideas on facilitation, with a focus on decision-making tools and techniques. The book includes excellent illustrations, which can be reproduced to help explain facilitation concepts to others.
Other Meeting Design and Facilitation Resources

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF)
The IAF promotes, supports and advances the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking and support services.

Interaction Associates
Interaction Associates is the creator and distributor of the Mastering Meetings: Tools for Collaborative Action and Essential Facilitation classes which MIT is licensed to teach. The Tips and Techniques section at their Web site is particularly useful.

**C-SPAN is broadcast on cable, and online for no cost.

Media Attributions

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II. Gantt Chart

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A Gantt chart showing three kinds of schedule dependencies (in red) and percent complete indications.

Introduction

A Gantt chart is a type of bar chart[3][4] that illustrates a project schedule.[5] This chart lists the tasks to be performed on the vertical axis, and time intervals on the horizontal axis.[5][6] The width of the horizontal bars in the graph shows the duration of each activity.[6][7] Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements and summary elements of a project. Terminal elements and summary elements constitute the work breakdown structure of the project. Modern Gantt charts also show the dependency (i.e., precedence network) relationships between activities.
Gantt charts can be used to show current schedule status using percent-complete shadings and a vertical "TODAY" line as shown here.

Gantt charts are usually created initially using an early start time approach, where each task is scheduled to start immediately when its prerequisites are complete. This method maximizes the float time available for all tasks. In 1999, Gantt charts were identified as "one of the most widely used management tools for project scheduling and control".

Example

In the following table there are seven tasks, labeled a through g. Some tasks can be done concurrently (a and b) while others cannot be done until their predecessor task is complete (c and d cannot begin until a is complete). Additionally, each task has three time estimates: the optimistic time estimate (O), the most likely or normal time estimate (M), and the pessimistic time estimate (P). The expected time (TE) is estimated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Predecessor</th>
<th>Time estimates</th>
<th>Expected time (TE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opt. (O)</td>
<td>Normal (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>e</td>
<td>b, c</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once this step is complete, one can draw a Gantt chart or a network diagram.

A Gantt chart created using Microsoft Project (MSP). Note (1) the critical path is in red, (2) the slack is the black lines connected to non-critical activities, (3) since Saturday and Sunday are not work days and are thus excluded from the schedule, some bars on the Gantt chart are longer if they cut through a weekend.

Progress Gantt charts

In a progress Gantt chart, tasks are shaded in proportion to the degree of their completion: a task that is 60% complete would be 60% shaded, starting from the left. A vertical line is drawn at the time index when the progress Gantt chart is created, and this line can then be compared with shaded tasks. If everything is on schedule, all task portions left of the
line will be shaded, and all task portions right of the line will not be shaded. This provides a visual representation of how the project and its tasks are ahead or behind schedule.\[201\]

Citations

1. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Gantt 1910.}}\)
2. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Morris 1997, p. 7.}}\)
3. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b c d e f Klein 1999, p. 49.}}\)
4. \(^{\text{Richman 2002, pp. 97, 117, 276.}}\)
6. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Richman 2002, pp. 117, 276.}}\)
7. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Selig 2008, p. 235.}}\)
8. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Flouris & Lock 2012, p. 236, Chapter 12.}}\)
9. \(^{\text{Wilson 2003.}}\)
10. \(^{\text{Marsh 1974, p. 32.}}\)
11. \(^{\text{Weaver 2012a, pp. 5–6.}}\)
12. \(^{\text{Weaver 2012b, pp. 4–6.}}\)
13. \(^{\text{Weaver 2017, pp. 6–7.}}\)
14. \(^{\text{Weaver 2017, p. 7.}}\)
15. \(^{\text{Weaver 2017, p. 6.}}\)
16. \(^{\text{Clark 1922.}}\)
17. \(^{\text{Jump up to a b Flouris & Lock 2012, p. 281, Chapter 14.}}\)
20. \(^{\text{Klein 1999, pp. 56–57.}}\)
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Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe organizational culture and why it is important for an organization.
- Understand the dimensions that make up a company's culture.
- Understand factors that create culture.
- Understand how to change culture.
- Understand how organizational culture and ethics relate.
- Understand cross-cultural differences in organizational culture.

Just like individuals, you can think of organizations as having their own personalities, more typically known as organizational cultures. The opening case illustrates that Nordstrom is a retailer with the foremost value of making customers happy. At Nordstrom, when a customer is unhappy, employees are expected to identify what would make the person satisfied, and then act on it, without necessarily checking with a superior or consulting a lengthy policy book. If they do not, they receive peer pressure and may be made to feel that they let the company down. In other words, this organization seems to have successfully created a service culture. Understanding how culture is created, communicated, and changed will help you be more effective in your organizational life. But first, let's define organizational culture.
Nordstrom Inc. (NYSE: JWN) is a Seattle-based department store rivaling the likes of Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, and Bloomingdale's. Nordstrom is a Hall of Fame member of Fortune magazine's “100 Best Companies to Work For” list, including being ranked 34th in 2008. Nordstrom is known for its quality apparel, upscale environment, and generous employee rewards. However, what Nordstrom is most famous for is its delivery of customer service above and beyond the norms of the retail industry. Stories about Nordstrom service abound. For example, according to one story the company confirms, in 1975 Nordstrom moved into a new location that had formerly been a tire store. A customer brought a set of tires into the store to return them. Without a word about the mix-up, the tires were accepted, and the customer was fully refunded the purchase price. In a different story, a customer tried on several pairs of shoes but failed to find the right combination of size and color. As she was about to leave, the clerk called other Nordstrom stores but could only locate the right pair at Macy's, a nearby competitor. The clerk had Macy's ship the shoes to the customer's home at Nordstrom's expense. In a third story, a customer describes wandering into a Portland, Oregon, Nordstrom looking for an Armani tuxedo for his daughter's wedding. The sales associate took his measurements just in case one was found. The next day, the customer got a phone call, informing him that the tux was available. When pressed, she revealed that using her
connections she found one in New York, had it put on a truck destined to Chicago, and dispatched someone to meet the truck in Chicago at a rest stop. The next day she shipped the tux to the customer’s address, and the customer found that the tux had already been altered for his measurements and was ready to wear. What is even more impressive about this story is that Nordstrom does not sell Armani tuxedos.

How does Nordstrom persist in creating these stories? If you guessed that they have a large number of rules and regulations designed to emphasize quality in customer service, you’d be wrong. In fact, the company gives employees a 5½-inch by 7½-inch card as the employee handbook. On one side of the card, the company welcomes employees to Nordstrom and states that their number one goal is to provide outstanding customer service, and for this they have only one rule. On the other side of the card, the single rule is stated: “Use good judgment in all situations.” By leaving it in the hands of Nordstrom associates, the company seems to have empowered employees who deliver customer service heroics every day.


Discussion Questions

1. Describe Nordstrom’s organizational culture.
2. Despite the low wages and long hours that are typical of retail employment, Nordstrom still has the ability to motivate its staff to exhibit exemplary customer service. How might this be explained?
3. What suggestions would you give Nordstrom for maintaining and evolving the organizational culture that has contributed to its success?
4. What type of organizational culture do you view as most important?
5. What attributes of Nordstrom’s culture do you find most appealing?
Understanding Organizational Culture

Learning Objectives

1. Define organizational culture.
2. Understand why organizational culture is important.
3. Understand the different levels of organizational culture.

What Is Organizational Culture?

Organizational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that show employees what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior (Chatman & Eunyoung, 2003; Kerr & Slocum Jr., 2005). These values have a strong influence on employee behavior as well as organizational performance. In fact, the term organizational culture was made popular in the 1980s when Peters and Waterman's best-selling book In Search of Excellence made the argument that company success could be attributed to an organizational culture that was decisive, customer oriented, empowering, and people oriented. Since then, organizational culture has become the subject of numerous research studies, books, and articles. However, organizational culture is still a relatively new concept. In contrast to a topic such as leadership, which has a history spanning several centuries, organizational culture is a young but fast-growing area within organizational behavior.

Culture is by and large invisible to individuals. Even though it affects all employee behaviors, thinking, and behavioral patterns, individuals tend to become more aware of their organization's culture when they have the opportunity to compare it to other organizations. If you have worked in multiple organizations, you can attest to this. Maybe the first organization you worked was a place where employees dressed formally. It was completely inappropriate to question your boss in a meeting; such behaviors would only be acceptable in private. It was important to check your e-mail at night as well as during weekends or else you would face questions on Monday about where you were and whether you were sick. Contrast this company to a second organization where employees dress more casually. You are encouraged to raise issues and question your boss or peers, even in front of clients. What is more important is not to maintain impressions but to arrive at the best solution to any problem. It is widely known that family life is very important, so it is acceptable to leave work a bit early to go to a family event. Additionally, you are not expected to do work at night or over the weekends unless there is a deadline. These two hypothetical organizations illustrate that organizations have different cultures, and culture dictates what is right and what is acceptable behavior as well as what is wrong and unacceptable.

Why Does Organizational Culture Matter?

An organization's culture may be one of its strongest assets, as well as its biggest liability. In fact, it has been argued...
that organizations that have a rare and hard-to-imitate organizational culture benefit from it as a competitive advantage (Barney, 1986). In a survey conducted by the management consulting firm Bain & Company in 2007, worldwide business leaders identified corporate culture as important as corporate strategy for business success (Why culture can mean life or death, 2007). This comes as no surprise to many leaders of successful businesses, who are quick to attribute their company's success to their organization's culture.

Culture, or shared values within the organization, may be related to increased performance. Researchers found a relationship between organizational cultures and company performance, with respect to success indicators such as revenues, sales volume, market share, and stock prices (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). At the same time, it is important to have a culture that fits with the demands of the company's environment. To the extent shared values are proper for the company in question, company performance may benefit from culture (Arogyaswamy & Byles, 1987). For example, if a company is in the high-tech industry, having a culture that encourages innovativeness and adaptability will support its performance. However, if a company in the same industry has a culture characterized by stability, a high respect for tradition, and a strong preference for upholding rules and procedures, the company may suffer as a result of its culture. In other words, just as having the "right" culture may be a competitive advantage for an organization, having the "wrong" culture may lead to performance difficulties, may be responsible for organizational failure, and may act as a barrier preventing the company from changing and taking risks.

In addition to having implications for organizational performance, organizational culture is an effective control mechanism for dictating employee behavior. Culture is in fact a more powerful way of controlling and managing employee behaviors than organizational rules and regulations. When problems are unique, rules tend to be less helpful. Instead, creating a culture of customer service achieves the same result by encouraging employees to think like customers, knowing that the company priorities in this case are clear: Keeping the customer happy is preferable to other concerns such as saving the cost of a refund.

Levels of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture consists of some aspects that are relatively more visible, as well as aspects that may lie below one's conscious awareness. Organizational culture can be thought of as consisting of three interrelated levels (Schein, 1992).

Figure 3

![Diagram showing levels of organizational culture: Assumptions, Values, Artifacts.]

At the deepest level, below our awareness lie basic assumptions. Assumptions are taken for granted, and they reflect beliefs about human nature and reality. At the second level, values exist. Values are shared principles, standards, and goals. Finally, at the surface we have artifacts, or visible, tangible aspects of organizational culture. For example, in an organization one of the basic assumptions employees and managers share might be that happy employees benefit their organizations. This assumption could translate into values such as social equality, high quality relationships, and having fun. The artifacts reflecting such values might be an executive “open door” policy, an office layout that includes open spaces and gathering areas equipped with pool tables, and frequent company picnics in the workplace. For example, Alcoa Inc. designed their
headquarters to reflect the values of making people more visible and accessible, and to promote collaboration (Stegmeier, 2008). In other words, understanding the organization's culture may start from observing its artifacts: the physical environment, employee interactions, company policies, reward systems, and other observable characteristics. When you are interviewing for a position, observing the physical environment, how people dress, where they relax, and how they talk to others is definitely a good start to understanding the company's culture. However, simply looking at these tangible aspects is unlikely to give a full picture of the organization. An important chunk of what makes up culture exists below one's degree of awareness. The values and, at a deeper level, the assumptions that shape the organization's culture can be uncovered by observing how employees interact and the choices they make, as well as by inquiring about their beliefs and perceptions regarding what is right and appropriate behavior.

**Key Takeaway**

Organizational culture is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that help individuals within an organization understand which behaviors are and are not appropriate within an organization. Cultures can be a source of competitive advantage for organizations. Strong organizational cultures can be an organizing as well as a controlling mechanism for organizations. And finally, organizational culture consists of three levels: assumptions, which are below the surface, values, and artifacts.

**Exercises**

1. Why do companies need culture?
2. Give an example of an aspect of company culture that is a strength and one that is a weakness.
3. In what ways does culture serve as a controlling mechanism?
4. If assumptions are below the surface, why do they matter?
5. Share examples of artifacts you have noticed at different organizations.

**Characteristics of Organizational Culture**

**Learning Objectives**

1. Understand different dimensions of organizational culture.
2. Understand the role of culture strength.
Strength of Culture

A strong culture is one that is shared by organizational members (Arogyaswamy & Byles, 1987; Chatman & Eunyoung, 2003). In other words, if most employees in the organization show consensus regarding the values of the company, it is possible to talk about the existence of a strong culture. A culture's content is more likely to affect the way employees think and behave when the culture in question is strong. For example, cultural values emphasizing customer service will lead to higher quality customer service if there is widespread agreement among employees on the importance of customer service-related values (Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002).

It is important to realize that a strong culture may act as an asset or liability for the organization, depending on the types of values that are shared. For example, imagine a company with a culture that is strongly outcome oriented. If this value system matches the organizational environment, the company outperforms its competitors. On the other hand, a strong outcome-oriented culture coupled with unethical behaviors and an obsession with quantitative performance indicators may be detrimental to an organization's effectiveness. An extreme example of this dysfunctional type of strong culture is Enron.

A strong culture may sometimes outperform a weak culture because of the consistency of expectations. In a strong culture, members know what is expected of them, and the culture serves as an effective control mechanism on member behaviors. Research shows that strong cultures lead to more stable corporate performance in stable environments. However, in volatile environments, the advantages of culture strength disappear (Sorensen 2002).

One limitation of a strong culture is the difficulty of changing a strong culture. If an organization with widely shared beliefs decides to adopt a different set of values, unlearning the old values and learning the new ones will be a challenge, because employees will need to adopt new ways of thinking, behaving, and responding to critical events. For example, the Home Depot Inc. had a decentralized, autonomous culture where many business decisions were made using “gut feeling” while ignoring the available data. When Robert Nardelli became CEO of the company in 2000, he decided to change its culture, starting with centralizing many of the decisions that were previously left to individual stores. This initiative met with substantial resistance, and many high-level employees left during his first year. Despite getting financial results such as doubling the sales of the company, many of the changes he made were criticized. He left the company in January 2007 (Charan, 2006; Herman & Wernle, 2007).

A strong culture may also be a liability during a merger. During mergers and acquisitions, companies inevitably experience a clash of cultures, as well as a clash of structures and operating systems. Culture clash becomes more problematic if both parties have unique and strong cultures. For example, during the merger of Daimler AG with Chrysler Motors LLC to create DaimlerChrysler AG, the differing strong cultures of each company acted as a barrier
to effective integration. Daimler had a strong engineering culture that was more hierarchical and emphasized routinely working long hours. Daimler employees were used to being part of an elite organization, evidenced by flying first class on all business trips. On the other hand, Chrysler had a sales culture where employees and managers were used to autonomy, working shorter hours, and adhering to budget limits that meant only the elite flew first class. The different ways of thinking and behaving in these two companies introduced a number of unanticipated problems during the integration process (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Bower, 2001). Differences in culture may be part of the reason that, in the end, the merger didn't work out.

**Do Organizations Have a Single Culture?**

So far, we have assumed that a company has a single culture that is shared throughout the organization. However, you may have realized that this is an oversimplification. In reality there might be multiple cultures within any given organization. For example, people working on the sales floor may experience a different culture from that experienced by people working in the warehouse. A culture that emerges within different departments, branches, or geographic locations is called a *subculture*. Subcultures may arise from the personal characteristics of employees and managers, as well as the different conditions under which work is performed. Within the same organization, marketing and manufacturing departments often have different cultures such that the marketing department may emphasize innovativeness, whereas the manufacturing department may have a shared emphasis on detail orientation. In an interesting study, researchers uncovered five different subcultures within a single police organization. These subcultures differed depending on the level of danger involved and the type of background experience the individuals held, including “crime-fighting street professionals” who did what their job required without rigidly following protocol and “anti-military social workers” who felt that most problems could be resolved by talking to the parties involved (Jermier et al., 1991). Research has shown that employee perceptions regarding subcultures were related to employee commitment to the organization (Lok, Westwood, & Crawford, 2005). Therefore, in addition to understanding the broader organization's values, managers will need to make an effort to understand subculture values to see its impact on workforce behavior and attitudes. Moreover, as an employee, you need to understand the type of subculture in the department where you will work in addition to understanding the company's overall culture.

Sometimes, a subculture may take the form of a *counterculture*. Defined as shared values and beliefs that are in direct opposition to the values of the broader organizational culture (Kerr & Slocum, 2005), countercultures are often shaped around a charismatic leader. For example, within a largely bureaucratic organization, an enclave of innovativeness and risk taking may emerge within a single department. A counterculture may be tolerated by the organization as long as it is bringing in results and contributing positively to the effectiveness of the organization. However, its existence may be perceived as a threat to the broader organizational culture. In some cases this may lead to actions that would take away the autonomy of the managers and eliminate the counterculture.

**Key Takeaway**

Culture can be understood in terms of seven different culture dimensions, depending on what is most emphasized within the organization. For example, innovative cultures are flexible and adaptable, and they experiment with new ideas, while stable cultures are predictable, rule-oriented, and bureaucratic. Strong cultures can be an asset or a liability for an organization but can be challenging to change. Organizations may have subcultures and countercultures, which can be challenging to manage.
Exercises

1. Think about an organization you are familiar with. Based on the dimensions of OCP, how would you characterize its culture?
2. Out of the culture dimensions described, which dimension do you think would lead to higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention? Which one would be related to company performance?
3. What are the pros and cons of an outcome-oriented culture?
4. When bureaucracies were first invented they were considered quite innovative. Do you think that different cultures are more or less effective at different points in time and in different industries? Why or why not?
5. Can you imagine an effective use of subcultures within an organization?

Creating and Maintaining Organizational Culture

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how cultures are created.
2. Learn how to maintain a culture.
3. Recognize organizational culture signs.

How Are Cultures Created?

Where do cultures come from? Understanding this question is important so that you know how they can be changed. An organization's culture is shaped as the organization faces external and internal challenges and learns how to deal with them. When the organization's way of doing business provides a successful adaptation to environmental challenges and ensures success, those values are retained. These values and ways of doing business are taught to new members as the way to do business (Schein, 1992).
The factors that are most important in the creation of an organization’s culture include founders’ values, preferences, and industry demands.

**How Are Cultures Maintained?**

As a company matures, its cultural values are refined and strengthened. The early values of a company’s culture exert influence over its future values. It is possible to think of organizational culture as an organism that protects itself from external forces. Organizational culture determines what types of people are hired by an organization and what types are left out. Moreover, once new employees are hired, the company assimilates new employees and teaches them the way things are done in the organization. We call these processes attraction-selection-attrition and onboarding processes. We will also examine the role of leaders and reward systems in shaping and maintaining an organization’s culture. It is important to remember two points: The process of culture creation is in fact more complex and less clean than the name implies. Additionally, the influence of each factor on culture creation is reciprocal. For example, just as leaders may influence what type of values the company has, the culture may also determine what types of behaviors leaders demonstrate.
Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA)

Organizational culture is maintained through a process known as attraction-selection-attrition. First, employees are attracted to organizations where they will fit in. In other words, different job applicants will find different cultures to be attractive. Someone who has a competitive nature may feel comfortable and prefer to work in a company where interpersonal competition is the norm. Others may prefer to work in a team-oriented workplace. Research shows that employees with different personality traits find different cultures attractive. For example, out of the Big Five personality traits, employees who demonstrate neurotic personalities were less likely to be attracted to innovative cultures, whereas those who had openness to experience were more likely to be attracted to innovative cultures (Judge & Cable, 1997). As a result, individuals will self-select the companies they work for and may stay away from companies that have core values that are radically different from their own.

Of course this process is imperfect, and value similarity is only one reason a candidate might be attracted to a company. There may be other, more powerful attractions such as good benefits. For example, candidates who are potential misfits may still be attracted to Google because of the cool perks associated with being a Google employee. At this point in the process, the second component of the ASA framework prevents them from getting in: Selection. Just as candidates are looking for places where they will fit in, companies are also looking for people who will fit into their current corporate culture. Many companies are hiring people for fit with their culture, as opposed to fit with a certain job. For example, Southwest Airlines prides itself for hiring employees based on personality and attitude rather than specific job-related skills, which are learned after being hired. This is important for job applicants to know, because in addition to highlighting your job-relevant skills, you will need to discuss why your personality and values match those of the company. Companies use different techniques to weed out candidates who do not fit with corporate values. For example, Google relies on multiple interviews with future peers. By introducing the candidate to several future coworkers and learning what these coworkers think of the candidate, it becomes easier to assess the level of fit. The Container Store Inc. ensures culture fit by hiring among their customers (Arnold, 2007). This way, they can make sure that job candidates are already interested in organizing their lives and understand the company’s commitment to helping customers organize theirs. Companies may also use employee referrals in their recruitment process. By using their current employees as a source of future employees, companies may make sure that the newly hired employees go through a screening process to avoid potential person-culture mismatch.

Even after a company selects people for person-organization fit, there may be new employees who do not fit in. Some candidates may be skillful in impressing recruiters and signal high levels of culture fit even though they do not necessarily share the company’s values. Moreover, recruiters may suffer from perceptual biases and hire some candidates thinking that they fit with the culture even though the actual fit is low. In any event, the organization is going to eventually eliminate candidates who do not fit in through attrition. Attrition refers to the natural process in which the candidates who do not fit in will leave the company. Research indicates that person-organization misfit is one of the important reasons for employee turnover (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; O’Reilly III, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991).

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As a result of the ASA process, the company attracts, selects, and retains people who share its core values. On the other hand, those people who are different in core values will be excluded from the organization either during the hiring process or later on through naturally occurring turnover. Thus, organizational culture will act as a self-defending organism where intrusive elements are kept out. Supporting the existence of such self-protective mechanisms, research shows that organizations demonstrate a certain level of homogeneity regarding personalities and values of organizational members (Giberson, Resick, & Dickson, 2005).

New Employee Onboarding

Another way in which an organization’s values, norms, and behavioral patterns are transmitted to employees is through onboarding (also referred to as the organizational socialization process). Onboarding refers to the process through which new employees learn the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to function effectively within an organization. If an organization can successfully socialize new employees into becoming organizational insiders, new employees feel confident regarding their ability to perform, sense that they will feel accepted by their peers, and understand and share the assumptions, norms, and values that are part of the organization’s culture. This understanding and confidence in turn translate into more effective new employees who perform better and have higher job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and longer tenure within the company (Bauer et al., 2007).

There are many factors that play a role in the successful adjustment of new employees. New employees can engage in several activities to help increase their own chances of success at a new organization. Organizations also engage in different activities, such as implementing orientation programs or matching new employees with mentors, which may facilitate onboarding.

OB Toolbox: You’ve Got a New Job! Now How Do You Get on Board?

- **Gather information.** Try to find as much about the company and the job as you can before your first day. After you start working, be a good observer, gather information, and read as much as you can to understand your job and the company. Examine how people are interacting, how they dress, and how they act to avoid behaviors that might indicate to others that you are a misfit.
- **Manage your first impression.** First impressions may endure, so make sure that you dress appropriately, are friendly, and communicate your excitement to be a part of the team. Be on your best behavior!
- **Invest in relationship development.** The relationships you develop with your manager and with coworkers will be essential for you to adjust to your new job. Take the time to strike up conversations with them. If there are work functions during your early days, make sure not to miss them!
- **Seek feedback.** Ask your manager or coworkers how well you are doing and whether you are meeting expectations. Listen to what they are telling you and also listen to what they are not saying. Then, make sure to act upon any suggestions for improvement. Be aware that after seeking feedback, you may create a negative impression if you consistently ignore the feedback you receive.
- **Show success early on.** In order to gain the trust of your new manager and colleagues, you may want to establish a history of success early. Volunteer for high-profile projects where you will be able to demonstrate your skills. Alternatively, volunteer for projects that may serve as learning opportunities or that may put you in touch with the key people in the company.
Leadership

Leaders are instrumental in creating and changing an organization's culture. There is a direct correspondence between a leader's style and an organization's culture. For example, when leaders motivate employees through inspiration, corporate culture tends to be more supportive and people oriented. When leaders motivate by making rewards contingent on performance, the corporate culture tends to be more performance oriented and competitive (Sarros, Gray, & Derensten, 2002). In these and many other ways, what leaders do directly influences the cultures their organizations have.

Part of the leader's influence over culture is through role modeling. Many studies have suggested that leader behavior, the consistency between organizational policy and leader actions, and leader role modeling determine the degree to which the organization's culture emphasizes ethics (Driscoll & McKee, 2007). The leader's own behaviors will signal to employees what is acceptable behavior and what is unacceptable. In an organization in which high-level managers make the effort to involve others in decision making and seek opinions of others, a team-oriented culture is more likely to evolve. By acting as role models, leaders send signals to the organization about the norms and values that are expected to guide the actions of organizational members.

Leaders also shape culture by their reactions to the actions of others around them. For example, do they praise a job well done, or do they praise a favored employee regardless of what was accomplished? How do they react when someone admits to making an honest mistake? What are their priorities? In meetings, what types of questions do they ask? Do they want to know what caused accidents so that they can be prevented, or do they seem more concerned about how much money was lost as a result of an accident? Do they seem outraged when an employee is disrespectful to a coworker, or does their reaction depend on whether they like the harasser? Through their day-to-day actions, leaders shape and maintain an organization's culture.

Reward Systems

Finally, the company culture is shaped by the type of reward systems used in the organization, and the kinds of behaviors and outcomes it chooses to reward and punish. One relevant element of the reward system is whether the organization rewards behaviors or results. Some companies have reward systems that emphasize intangible elements of performance as well as more easily observable metrics. In these companies, supervisors and peers may evaluate an employee's performance by assessing the person's behaviors as well as the results. In such companies, we may expect a culture that is relatively people or team oriented, and employees act as part of a family (Kerr & Slocum, 2005). On the other hand, in companies that purely reward goal achievement, there is a focus on measuring only the results without much regard to the process. In these companies, we might observe outcome-oriented and competitive cultures.

Another categorization of reward systems might be whether the organization uses rankings or ratings. In a company where the reward system pits members against one another, where employees are ranked against each other and the lower performers receive long-term or short-term punishments, it would be hard to develop a culture of people...
orientation and may lead to a competitive culture. On the other hand, evaluation systems that reward employee behavior by comparing them to absolute standards as opposed to comparing employees to each other may pave the way to a team-oriented culture. Whether the organization rewards performance or seniority would also make a difference in culture. When promotions are based on seniority, it would be difficult to establish a culture of outcome orientation. Finally, the types of behaviors that are rewarded or ignored set the tone for the culture. Service-oriented cultures reward, recognize, and publicize exceptional service on the part of their employees. In safety cultures, safety metrics are emphasized and the organization is proud of its low accident ratings. What behaviors are rewarded, which ones are punished, and which are ignored will determine how a company's culture evolves.

Visual Elements of Organizational Culture

How do you find out about a company's culture? We emphasized earlier that culture influences the way members of the organization think, behave, and interact with one another. Thus, one way of finding out about a company's culture is by observing employees or interviewing them. At the same time, culture manifests itself in some visible aspects of the organization's environment. In this section, we discuss five ways in which culture shows itself to observers and employees.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a statement of purpose, describing who the company is and what it does. Many companies have mission statements, but they do not always reflect the company's values and its purpose. An effective mission statement is well known by employees, is transmitted to all employees starting from their first day at work, and influences employee behavior.

Not all mission statements are effective, because some are written by public relations specialists and can be found in a company's Web site, but it does not affect how employees act or behave. In fact, some mission statements reflect who the company wants to be as opposed to who they actually are. If the mission statement does not affect employee behavior on a day-to-day basis, it has little usefulness as a tool for understanding the company's culture. An oft-cited example of a mission statement that had little impact on how a company operates belongs to Enron. Their mission and values statement began, "As a partner in the communities in which we operate, Enron believes it has a responsibility to conduct itself according to certain basic principles." Their values statement included such ironic declarations as "We do not tolerate abusive or disrespectful treatment. Ruthlessness, callousness and arrogance don't belong here" (Kunen, 2002).

A mission statement that is taken seriously and widely communicated may provide insights into the corporate culture. For example, the Mayo Clinic's mission statement is "The needs of the patient come first." This mission statement evolved from the founders who are quoted as saying, "The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered." Mayo Clinics have a corporate culture that puts patients first. For example, no incentives are given to physicians based on the number of patients they see. Because doctors are salaried, they have no interest in retaining a patient for themselves and they refer the patient to other doctors when needed (Jarnagin & Slocum, 2007). Wal-Mart Stores Inc. may be another example of a company who lives its mission statement, and therefore its mission statement may give hints about its culture: "Saving people money so they can live better" (Wal-Mart, 2008). In fact, their culture emphasizes thrift and cost control in everything they do. For example, even though most CEOs of large companies in the United States have lavish salaries and showy offices, Wal-Mart's CEO Michael Duke and other high-level corporate officers work out of modest offices in the company's headquarters.
Rituals refer to repetitive activities within an organization that have symbolic meaning (Anand, 2005). Usually rituals have their roots in the history of a company's culture. They create camaraderie and a sense of belonging among employees. They also serve to teach employees corporate values and create identification with the organization. For example, at the cosmetics firm Mary Kay Inc., employees attend award ceremonies recognizing their top salespeople with an award of a new car—traditionally a pink Cadillac. These ceremonies are conducted in large auditoriums where participants wear elaborate evening gowns and sing company songs that create emotional excitement. During this ritual, employees feel a connection to the company culture and its values, such as self-determination, will power, and enthusiasm (Jarnagin & Slocum, 2007). Another example of rituals is the Saturday morning meetings of Wal-Mart. This ritual was first created by the company founder Sam Walton, who used these meetings to discuss which products and practices were doing well and which required adjustment. He was able to use this information to make changes in Wal-Mart's stores before the start of the week, which gave him a competitive advantage over rival stores who would make their adjustments based on weekly sales figures during the middle of the following week. Today, hundreds of Wal-Mart associates attend the Saturday morning meetings in the Bentonville, Arkansas, headquarters. The meetings, which run from 7:00 to 9:30 a.m., start and end with the Wal-Mart cheer; the agenda includes a discussion of weekly sales figures and merchandising tactics. As a ritual, the meetings help maintain a small-company atmosphere, ensure employee involvement and accountability, communicate a performance orientation, and demonstrate taking quick action (Schlender, 2005; Wal around the world, 2001).

Rules and Policies

Another way in which an observer may find out about a company's culture is to examine its rules and policies. Companies create rules to determine acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and thus the rules that exist in a company will signal the type of values it has. Policies about issues such as decision making, human resources, and employee privacy reveal what the company values and emphasizes. For example, a company that has a policy such as “all pricing decisions of merchandise will be made at corporate headquarters” is likely to have a centralized culture that is hierarchical, as opposed to decentralized and empowering. Similarly, a company that extends benefits to both part-time and full-time employees, as well as to spouses and domestic partners, signals to employees and observers that it cares
about its employees and shows concern for their well-being. By offering employees flexible work hours, sabbaticals, and telecommuting opportunities, a company may communicate its emphasis on work-life balance. The presence or absence of policies on sensitive issues such as English-only rules, bullying or unfair treatment of others, workplace surveillance, open-door policies, sexual harassment, workplace romances, and corporate social responsibility all provide pieces of the puzzle that make up a company's culture.

Physical Layout

A company’s building, including the layout of employee offices and other work spaces, communicates important messages about a company's culture. The building architecture may indicate the core values of an organization's culture. For example, visitors walking into the Nike Inc. campus in Beaverton, Oregon, can witness firsthand some of the distinguishing characteristics of the company's culture. The campus is set on 74 acres and boasts an artificial lake, walking trails, soccer fields, and cutting-edge fitness centers. The campus functions as a symbol of Nike's values such as energy, physical fitness, an emphasis on quality, and a competitive orientation. In addition, at fitness centers on the Nike headquarters, only those wearing Nike shoes and apparel are allowed in. This sends a strong signal that loyalty is expected. The company's devotion to athletes and their winning spirits is manifested in campus buildings named after famous athletes, photos of athletes hanging on the walls, and honorary statues dotting the campus (Capowski, 1993; Collins & Porras, 1996; Labich & Carvell, 1995; Mitchell, 2002). A very different tone awaits visitors to Wal-Mart headquarters, where managers have gray and windowless offices (Berner, 2007). By putting its managers in small offices and avoiding outward signs of flashiness, Wal-Mart does a good job of highlighting its values of economy.

The layout of the office space also is a strong indicator of a company’s culture. A company that has an open layout where high-level managers interact with employees may have a culture of team orientation and egalitarianism, whereas a company where high-level managers have their own floor may indicate a higher level of hierarchy. Microsoft employees tend to have offices with walls and a door, because the culture emphasizes solitude, concentration, and privacy. In contrast, Intel Corporation is famous for its standard cubicles, which reflect its culture of equality. The same value can also be observed in its avoidance of private and reserved parking spots (Clark, 2007). The degree to which playfulness, humor, and fun is part of a company’s culture may be indicated in the office environment. For example, Jive Software boasts a colorful, modern, and comfortable office design. Their break room is equipped with a keg of beer, free snacks, and sodas, an XBOX 360, and Nintendo Wii. A casual observation of their work environment sends the message that employees who work there see their work as fun (Jive Software, 2008).

Stories

Perhaps the most colorful and effective way in which organizations communicate their culture to new employees and organizational members is through the skillful use of stories. A story can highlight a critical event an organization faced and the collective response to it, or can emphasize a heroic effort of a single employee illustrating the company’s values. The stories usually engage employee emotions and generate employee identification with the company or the heroes of the tale. A compelling story may be a key mechanism through which managers motivate employees by giving their behavior direction and energizing them toward a certain goal (Beslin, 2007). Moreover, stories shared with new employees communicate the company's history, its values and priorities, and serve the purpose of creating a bond between the new employee and the organization. For example, you may already be familiar with the story of how a scientist at 3M invented Post-it notes. Arthur Fry, a 3M scientist, was using slips of paper to mark the pages of hymns in his church choir, but they kept falling off. He remembered a super-weak adhesive that had been invented in 3M’s labs, and he coated the markers with this adhesive. Thus, the Post-it notes were born. However, marketing surveys for the
interest in such a product were weak, and the distributors were not convinced that it had a market. Instead of giving up, Fry distributed samples of the small yellow sticky notes to secretaries throughout his company. Once they tried them, people loved them and asked for more. Word spread, and this led to the ultimate success of the product. As you can see, this story does a great job of describing the core values of a 3M employee: Being innovative by finding unexpected uses for objects, persevering, and being proactive in the face of negative feedback (Higgins & McAllester, 2002).

**OB Toolbox: As a Job Candidate, How Would You Find Out If You Are a Good Fit?**

- **Do your research.** Talking to friends and family members who are familiar with the company, doing an online search for news articles about the company, browsing the company's Web site, and reading their mission statement would be a good start.
- **Observe the physical environment.** Do people work in cubicles or in offices? What is the dress code? What is the building structure? Do employees look happy, tired, or stressed? The answers to these questions are all pieces of the puzzle.
- **Read between the lines.** For example, the absence of a lengthy employee handbook or detailed procedures might mean that the company is more flexible and less bureaucratic.
- **How are you treated?** The recruitment process is your first connection to the company. Were you treated with respect? Do they maintain contact with you, or are you being ignored for long stretches at a time?
- **Ask questions.** What happened to the previous incumbent of this job? What does it take to be successful in this firm? What would their ideal candidate for the job look like? The answers to these questions will reveal a lot about the way they do business.
- **Listen to your gut.** Your feelings about the place in general, and your future manager and coworkers in particular, are important signs that you should not ignore.


**Key Takeaway**

Organization cultures are created by a variety of factors, including founders' values and preferences, industry demands, and early values, goals, and assumptions. Culture is maintained through attraction-selection-attrition, new employee onboarding, leadership, and organizational reward systems. Signs of a company’s culture include the organization's mission statement, stories, physical layout, rules and policies, and rituals.
Exercises

1. Do you think it is a good idea for companies to emphasize person–organization fit when hiring new employees? What advantages and disadvantages do you see when hiring people who fit with company values?

2. What is the influence of company founders on company culture? Give examples based on your personal knowledge.

3. What are the methods companies use to aid with employee onboarding? What is the importance of onboarding for organizations?

4. What type of a company do you feel would be a good fit for you? What type of a culture would be a misfit for you? In your past work experience, were there any moments when you felt that you did not fit with the organization? Why?

5. What is the role of physical layout as an indicator of company culture? What type of a physical layout would you expect from a company that is people oriented? Team oriented? Stable?

Creating Culture Change

Learning Objectives

1. Explain why culture change may be necessary.
2. Understand the process of culture change.

How Do Cultures Change?

Culture is part of a company's DNA and is resistant to change efforts. Unfortunately, many organizations may not even realize that their current culture constitutes a barrier against organizational productivity and performance. Changing company culture may be the key to the company turnaround when there is a mismatch between an organization's values and the demands of its environment.

Certain conditions may help with culture change. For example, if an organization is experiencing failure in the short run or is under threat of bankruptcy or an imminent loss of market share, it would be easier to convince managers and employees that culture change is necessary. A company can use such downturns to generate employee commitment to the change effort. However, if the organization has been successful in the past, and if employees do not perceive an urgency necessitating culture change, the change effort will be more challenging. Sometimes the external environment may force an organization to undergo culture change. Mergers and acquisitions are another example of an event that changes a company's culture. In fact, the ability of the two merging companies to harmonize their corporate cultures is
often what makes or breaks a merger effort. When Ben & Jerry's was acquired by Unilever, Ben & Jerry's had to change parts of its culture while attempting to retain some of its unique aspects. Corporate social responsibility, creativity, and fun remained as parts of the culture. In fact, when Unilever appointed a veteran French executive as the CEO of Ben & Jerry's in 2000, he was greeted by an Eiffel tower made out of ice cream pints, Edith Piaf songs, and employees wearing berets and dark glasses. At the same time, the company had to become more performance oriented in response to the acquisition. All employees had to keep an eye on the bottom line. For this purpose, they took an accounting and finance course for which they had to operate a lemonade stand (Kiger, 2005). Achieving culture change is challenging, and many companies ultimately fail in this mission. Research and case studies of companies that successfully changed their culture indicate that the following six steps increase the chances of success (Schein, 1990).

Figure 15.12 Six Steps to Culture Change

Creating a Sense of Urgency

In order for the change effort to be successful, it is important to communicate the need for change to employees. One way of doing this is to create a sense of urgency on the part of employees and explain to them why changing the fundamental way in which business is done is so important. In successful culture change efforts, leaders communicate with employees and present a case for culture change as the essential element that will lead the company to eventual success. As an example, consider the situation at IBM Corporation in 1993 when Lou Gerstner was brought in as CEO and chairman. After decades of dominating the market for mainframe computers, IBM was rapidly losing market share to competitors, and its efforts to sell personal computers—the original “PC”—were seriously undercut by cheaper “clones.” In the public’s estimation, the name IBM had become associated with obsolescence. Gerstner recalls that the crisis IBM was facing became his ally in changing the organization's culture. Instead of spreading optimism about the company's future, he used the crisis at every opportunity to get buy-in from employees (Gerstner, 2002).
Changing Leaders and Other Key Players

A leader’s vision is an important factor that influences how things are done in an organization. Thus, culture change often follows changes at the highest levels of the organization. Moreover, in order to implement the change effort quickly and efficiently, a company may find it helpful to remove managers and other powerful employees who are acting as a barrier to change. Because of political reasons, self interest, or habits, managers may create powerful resistance to change efforts. In such cases, replacing these positions with employees and managers giving visible support to the change effort may increase the likelihood that the change effort succeeds. For example, when Robert Iger replaced Michael Eisner as CEO of the Walt Disney Company, one of the first things he did was to abolish the central planning unit, which was staffed by people close to ex-CEO Eisner. This department was viewed as a barrier to creativity at Disney, and its removal from the company was helpful in ensuring the innovativeness of the company culture (McGregor et al., 2007).

Role Modeling

Role modeling is the process by which employees modify their own beliefs and behaviors to reflect those of the leader (Kark & Dijk, 2007). CEOs can model the behaviors that are expected of employees to change the culture. The ultimate goal is that these behaviors will trickle down to lower level employees. For example, when Robert Iger took over Disney, in order to show his commitment to innovation, he personally became involved in the process of game creation, attended summits of developers, and gave feedback to programmers about the games. Thus, he modeled his engagement in the idea creation process. In contrast, modeling of inappropriate behavior from the top will lead to the same behavior trickling down to lower levels. A recent example of this type of role modeling is the scandal involving Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP board members. In 2006, when board members were suspected of leaking confidential company information to the press, the company’s top-level executives hired a team of security experts to find the source of the leak. The investigators sought the phone records of board members, linking them to journalists. For this purpose, they posed as board members and called phone companies to obtain the itemized home phone records of board members and journalists. When the investigators’ methods came to light, HP’s chairman and four other top executives faced criminal and civil charges. When such behavior is modeled at top levels, it is likely to have an adverse impact on the company culture (Barron, 2007).

Training

Well-crafted training programs may be instrumental in bringing about culture change by teaching employees the new norms and behavioral styles. For example, after the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentry from a February 2003 mission, NASA decided to change its culture to become more safety sensitive and minimize decision-making errors leading to unsafe behaviors. The change effort included training programs in team processes and cognitive bias awareness. Similarly, when auto repairer Midas International Corporation felt the need to change its culture to be more committed to customers, they developed a training program making employees familiar with customer emotions and helping form better connections with them. Customer reports have been overwhelmingly positive in stores that underwent this training (BST to guide culture change effort at NASA, 2004).
Changing the Reward System

The criteria with which employees are rewarded and punished have a powerful role in determining the cultural values in existence. Switching from a commission-based incentive structure to a straight salary system may be instrumental in bringing about customer focus among sales employees. Moreover, by rewarding employees who embrace the company’s new values and even promoting these employees, organizations can make sure that changes in culture have a lasting impact. If a company wants to develop a team-oriented culture where employees collaborate with each other, methods such as using individual-based incentives may backfire. Instead, distributing bonuses to intact teams might be more successful in bringing about culture change.

Creating New Symbols and Stories

Finally, the success of the culture change effort may be increased by developing new rituals, symbols, and stories. Continental Airlines Inc. is a company that successfully changed its culture to be less bureaucratic and more team oriented in the 1990s. One of the first things management did to show employees that they really meant to abolish many of the detailed procedures the company had and create a culture of empowerment was to burn the heavy 800-page company policy manual in their parking lot. The new manual was only 80 pages. This action symbolized the upcoming changes in the culture and served as a powerful story that circulated among employees. Another early action was the redecorating of waiting areas and repainting of all their planes, again symbolizing the new order of things (Higgins & McAllester, 2004). By replacing the old symbols and stories, the new symbols and stories will help enable the culture change and ensure that the new values are communicated.

Key Takeaway

Organizations need to change their culture to respond to changing conditions in the environment, to remain competitive, and to avoid complacency or stagnation. Culture change often begins by the creation of a sense of urgency. Next, a change of leaders and other key players may enact change and serve as effective role models of new behavior. Training can also be targeted toward fostering these new behaviors. Reward systems are changed within the organization. Finally, the organization creates new stories and symbols.

Exercises

1. Can new employees change a company’s culture? If so, how?
2. Are there conditions under which change is not possible? If so, what would such conditions be?
3. Have you ever observed a change process at an organization you were involved with? If so, what worked well and what didn’t?
4. What recommendations would you have for someone considering a major change of culture within their own organization?
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13. Performance Evaluation

Introduction

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Figure 1: Performance meeting (Credit: home thods/flickr/Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. How do organizations effectively use performance appraisals to improve individual job performance, and what are the limitations inherent in the use of various appraisal systems?
2. What practices are used in the performance appraisal process?
3. How do managers give effective feedback to subordinates?
4. How do organizations choose the best appraisal system for their organization?
5. How do managers and organizations use incentives and rewards effectively to secure the best possible performance from employees?

Case Study
EXPLORING MANAGERIAL CAREERS

Two Performance Appraisal Interviews

“Janet, thanks for coming in. As you know, it’s that time of year again. I’ve been going over this performance appraisal form and have written in my evaluation. I’d like you to look it over and then sign it.”

Janet looked over her ratings, which were nearly all in the “satisfactory” range. Even the category of dependability was marked “satisfactory”; yet, it was Janet who came in on three different occasions to cover for workers in her group who were absent for one reason or another. Janet mentioned this issue to her boss, Ken.

“Well, Janet, you’re right and that’s exactly what I expect of my employees. You know this is your first year here and you can’t expect to reach the top in one jump. But I like your style and if you keep it up, who knows how far you’ll go.”

Twenty-four minutes after the interview began, Janet left, bewildered and disappointed. She had worked hard during her first year; in fact, she had gone the extra mile on a few occasions, and now she was more confused than ever about what was expected of her and what constituted good performance. “Maybe it just doesn’t pay to work hard.”

Two weeks before their scheduled interview, Mary asked Ron to review his goals and accomplishments for the last six months and to note any major changes in his job that had taken place during that period. In the meantime, Mary pulled out the file in which she had periodically recorded both positive and negative specific incidents over the last six months concerning Ron’s performance. She also reviewed the goals they had jointly set at the end of the last review and thought carefully about not only the possible goals for the next six months but longer-term development needs and goals that might be appropriate for Ron.

On the day of the interview, both Mary and Ron came well prepared to review the past six months as well as to think about and plan for the next performance period and beyond. The interview took nearly two hours. After candidly discussing Ron’s past performance and the extent to which both sides felt he had or had not accomplished the goals for that period, they began to focus on what should be accomplished in the future. The discussion caused both sides to make changes in their original evaluations and ideas about targets for the future. When it was over, Ron left more motivated than before and confident that even though he had areas in which he could improve, he had a bright future ahead of him if he continued to be motivated and work hard.

Performance Appraisal Systems

1. How do organizations effectively use performance appraisals to improve individual job performance, and what are the limitations inherent in the use of various appraisal systems?

Performance appraisals are one of the most important and often one of the most mishandled aspects of management. Typically, we think of performance appraisals as involving a boss evaluating a subordinate. However, performance
appraisals increasingly involve subordinates appraising bosses through a feedback process known as 360 feedback, customers appraising providers, and peers evaluating coworkers.

Whether appraisals are done by subordinates, peers, customers, or superiors, the process itself is vital to the lifeblood of the organization. Performance appraisal systems provide a means of systematically evaluating employees across various performance dimensions to ensure that organizations are getting what they pay for. They provide valuable feedback to employees and managers, and they assist in identifying promotable people as well as problems. However, such appraisals are meaningless unless they are accompanied by an effective feedback system that ensures that the employee gets the right messages concerning performance.

Reward systems represent a powerful motivational force in organizations, but this is true only when the system is fair and tied to performance. Because a variety of approaches to appraising performance exists, managers should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each. In turn, an understanding of reward systems will help managers select the system best suited to the needs and goals of the organization.

Performance appraisal systems serve a variety of functions of central importance to employees. Appraisal techniques practiced today are not without problems, though. Managers should keep abreast of recent developments in compensation and reward systems so they can modify existing systems when more appropriate alternatives become available.

A key management responsibility has always been to oversee and develop subordinates. In fact, it has been said that every manager is a human resource manager. Nowhere is this truer than with regard to evaluating and rewarding subordinates. Managers are consistently involved with employee training and development, monitoring employee performance, providing job-related feedback, and administering rewards.

In this chapter, we examine three interrelated aspects of the performance appraisal and reward process. As Figure 2 shows, this process moves from evaluating employee performance to providing adequate and constructive feedback to determining discretionary rewards. Where effort and performance are properly evaluated and rewarded, we would expect to see more stable and consistent job performance. On the other hand, where such performance is only evaluated intermittently or where the appraisal and review process is poorly done, we would generally see less consistent performance. We begin our discussion with a look at the nature of appraisals.

We begin by examining three aspects of performance appraisal systems: (1) the uses of performance appraisals, (2) problems found in performance appraisals, and (3) methods for reducing errors in the appraisal system. This overview will provide a foundation for studying specific techniques of performance appraisal. Those interested in more detailed information on performance appraisal systems may wish to consult books on personnel administration or compensation.

**Uses of Performance Appraisals**

In most work organizations, performance appraisals are used for a variety of reasons. These reasons range from...
improving employee productivity to developing the employees themselves. This diversity of uses is well documented in a study of why companies use performance appraisals. Traditionally, compensation and performance feedback have been the most prominent reasons organizations use performance appraisals.

**Feedback to employees.** Performance appraisals provide feedback to employees about quantity and quality of job performance. Without this information, employees have little knowledge of how well they are doing their jobs and how they might improve their work.

**Self-development.** Performance appraisals can also serve as an aid to employee self-development. Individuals learn about their strengths and weaknesses as seen by others and can initiate self-improvement programs (see discussion on behavioral self-management programs).

**Reward systems.** In addition, appraisals may form the bases of organizational reward systems—particularly merit-based compensation plans.

**Personnel decisions.** Performance appraisals serve personnel-related functions as well. In making personnel decisions, such as those relating to promotions, transfers, and terminations, they can be quite useful. Employers can make choices on the basis of information about individual talents and shortcomings. In addition, appraisal systems help management evaluate the effectiveness of its selection and placement functions. If newly hired employees generally perform poorly, managers should consider whether the right kind of people are being hired in the first place.

**Training and development.** Finally, appraisals can help managers identify areas in which employees lack critical skills for either immediate or future performance. In these situations, new or revised training programs can be established to further develop the company's human resources.

It is apparent that performance appraisal systems serve a variety of functions in organizations. In light of the importance of these functions, it is imperative that the accuracy and fairness of the appraisal be paramount considerations in the evaluation of a system. Many performance appraisal systems exist. It is the manager's job to select the technique or combination of techniques that best serves the particular needs (and constraints) of the organization. Before considering these various techniques, let us look at some of the more prominent problems and sources of error that are common to several of them.

**Problems with Performance Appraisals**

A number of problems can be identified that pose a threat to the value of appraisal techniques. Most of these problems deal with the related issues of the validity and reliability of the instruments or techniques themselves. Validity is the extent to which an instrument actually measures what it intends to measure, whereas reliability is the extent to which the instrument consistently yields the same results each time it is used. Ideally, a good performance appraisal system will exhibit high levels of both validity and reliability. If not, serious questions must be raised concerning the utility (and possibly the legality) of the system.

It is possible to identify several common sources of error in performance appraisal systems. These include: (1) central tendency error, (2) strictness or leniency error, (3) halo effect, (4) recency error, and (5) personal biases.

**Central Tendency Error.** It has often been found that supervisors rate most of their employees within a narrow range. Regardless of how people actually perform, the rater fails to distinguish significant differences among group members and lumps everyone together in an “average” category. This is called central tendency error and is shown in Figure 3. In short, the central tendency error is the failure to recognize either very good or very poor performers.
Strictness or Leniency Error. A related rating problem exists when a supervisor is overly strict or overly lenient in evaluations (see Figure 3). In college classrooms, we hear of professors who are “tough graders” or, conversely, “easy As.” Similar situations exist in the workplace, where some supervisors see most subordinates as not measuring up to their high standards, whereas other supervisors see most subordinates as deserving of a high rating. As with central tendency error, strictness error and leniency error fail to distinguish adequately between good and bad performers and instead relegate almost everyone to the same or related categories.

Halo Effect. The halo effect exists where a supervisor assigns the same rating to each factor being evaluated for an individual. For example, an employee rated above average on quantity of performance may also be rated above average on quality of performance, interpersonal competence, attendance, and promotion readiness. In other words, the supervisor cannot effectively differentiate between relatively discrete categories and instead gives a global rating.

These types of bias are based on our perceptions of others. The halo effect occurs when managers have an overly positive view of a particular employee. This can impact the objectivity of reviews, with managers consistently giving an employee high ratings and failing to recognize areas for improvement.

Whether positive or negative, we also have a natural tendency to confirm our preconceived beliefs about people in the way we interpret or recall performance, which is known as confirmatory bias.

For example, a manager may have a preconception that her male report is more assertive. This could cause her to recall instances more easily in which her report asserted his position during a meeting. On the other hand, she may perceive her female report to be less assertive, predisposing her to forget when the report suggested an effective strategy or was successful in a tough negotiation.

The halo effect is often a consequence of people having a similarity bias for certain types of people. We naturally tend to favor and trust people who are similar to us. Whether it’s people who also have a penchant for golf or people who remind us of a younger version of ourselves, favoritism that results from a similarity bias can give certain employees an unfair advantage over others. This can impact a team to the point that those employees may receive more coaching, better reviews and, as a result, more opportunities for advancement.

Recency Error. Oftentimes evaluators focus on an employee’s most recent behavior in the evaluation process. This is known as the recency error. That is, in an annual evaluation, a supervisor may give undue emphasis to performance during the past months—or even weeks—and ignore performance levels prior to this. This practice, if known to employees, leads to a situation where employees may “float” for the initial months of the evaluation period and then overexert themselves in the last few months or weeks prior to evaluation. This practice leads to uneven performance and contributes to the attitude of “playing the game.”

Personal Biases. Finally, it is not uncommon to find situations in which supervisors allow their own personal biases to
influence their appraisals. Such biases include like or dislike for someone, as well as racial and sexual biases. Personal biases can interfere with the fairness and accuracy of an evaluation and are illegal in many situations.

Reducing Errors in Performance Appraisals

A number of suggestions have been advanced recently to minimize the effects of various biases and errors on the performance appraisal process. When errors are reduced, more accurate information is available for personnel decisions and personal development. These methods for reducing errors include:

- ensuring that each dimension or factor on a performance appraisal form represents a single job activity instead of a group of job activities.
- avoiding terms such as average, because different evaluators define the term differently.
- ensuring that raters observe subordinates on a regular basis throughout the evaluation period. It is even helpful if the rater takes notes for future reference.
- keeping the number of persons evaluated by one rater to a reasonable number. When one person must evaluate many subordinates, it becomes difficult to discriminate. Rating fatigue increases with the number of ratees.
- ensuring that the dimensions used are clearly stated, meaningful, and relevant to good job performance.
- training raters so they can recognize various sources of error and understand the rationale underlying the evaluation process.

Using mechanisms like these, better employee ratings that can have greater meaning both for the individual employee and the organization will result.

CONCEPT CHECK

1. What are performance appraisals, and how are they used in organizations?
2. How are performance appraisals used as a reward system, and what problems can they cause?

Techniques of Performance Appraisal

2. What practices are used in the performance appraisal process?

Organizations use numerous methods to evaluate personnel. We will summarize several popular techniques. Although countless variations on these themes can be found, the basic methods presented provide a good summary of the commonly available techniques. Following this review, we will consider the various strengths and weaknesses of each
technique. Six techniques are reviewed here: (1) graphic rating scales, (2) critical incident technique, (3) behaviorally anchored rating scales, (4) behavioral observation scales, (5) management by objectives, and (6) assessment centers.

Graphic Rating Scales

Certainly, the most popular method of evaluation used in organizations today is the graphic rating scale. One study found that 57 percent of the organizations surveyed used rating scales, and another study found the figure to be 65 percent. Although this method appears in many formats, the supervisor or rater is typically presented with a printed or online form that contains both the employee’s name and several evaluation dimensions (quantity of work, quality of work, knowledge of job, attendance). The rater is then asked to rate the employee by assigning a number or rating on each of the dimensions. An example of a graphic rating scale is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Sample of a Typical Graphic Rating Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name ___________________ Dept. ___________ Date __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of acceptable work under normal conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness, neatness, and accuracy of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of the facts or factors pertinent to the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality, appearance, sociability, leadership, integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability and willingness to work with associates, supervisors, and subordinates toward common goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious, thorough, accurate, reliable with respect to attendance, lunch periods, reliefs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnestness in seeking increased responsibilities Self-starting, unafraid to proceed alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

By using this method, if we assume that evaluator biases can be minimized, it is possible to compare employees objectively. It is also possible to examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of a single employee by comparing scores on the various dimensions.
However, one of the most serious drawbacks of this technique is its openness to central tendency, strictness, and leniency errors. It is possible to rate almost everyone in the middle of the scale or, conversely, at one end of the scale. In order to control for this, some companies have assigned required percentage distributions to the various scale points. Supervisors may be allowed to rate only 10 percent of their people outstanding and are required to rate 10 percent unsatisfactory, perhaps assigning 20 percent, 40 percent, and 20 percent to the remaining middle categories. By doing this, a distribution is forced within each department. However, this procedure may penalize a group of truly outstanding performers or reward a group of poor ones.

Critical Incident Technique

With the critical incident technique of performance appraisal, supervisors record incidents, or examples, of each subordinate's behavior that led to either unusual success or unusual failure on some aspect of the job. These incidents are recorded in a daily or weekly log under predesignated categories (planning, decision-making, interpersonal relations, report writing). The final performance rating consists of a series of descriptive paragraphs or notes about various aspects of an employee's performance (see Table 2).
An Example of Critical Incident Evaluation

The following performance areas are designed to assist you in preparing this appraisal and in discussing an individual’s performance with her. It is suggested that areas of performance that you feel are significantly good or poor be documented below with specific examples or actions. The points listed are suggested as typical and are by no means all-inclusive. Examples related to these points may be viewed from either a positive or negative standpoint.

1. Performance on Technology of the Job

   A. Safety Effectiveness—possible considerations:
      1. sets an excellent safety example for others in the department by words and action
      2. trains people well in safety areas
      3. gains the cooperation and participation of people in safety
      4. insists that safety be designed into procedure and processes
      5. is instrumental in initiating departmental safety program
      6. accepts safety as a fundamental job responsibility

      | Item       | Related Examples |
      |------------|------------------|
      |            |                  |

   B. Job Knowledge—Technical and/or Specialized—possible considerations:
      1. shows exceptional knowledge in methods, materials, and techniques; applies in a resourceful and practical manner
      2. stays abreast of development(s) in field and applies to job
      3. “keeps up” on latest material in her special field
      4. participates in professional or technical organizations pertinent to her activities

      | Item       | Related Examples |
      |------------|------------------|
      |            |                  |

2. Performance on Human Relations

   A. Ability to Communicate—possible considerations:
      1. gives logical, clear-cut, understandable instructions on complex problems
      2. uses clear and direct language in written and oral reporting
      3. organizes presentations in logical order and in order of importance
      4. provides supervisor and subordinates with pertinent and adequate information
      5. tailors communications approach to group or individual
      6. keeps informed on how subordinates think and feel about things

      | Item       | Related Examples |
      |------------|------------------|
      |            |                  |

   B. Results Achieved through Others—possible considerations:
      1. develops enthusiasm in others that gets the job done
      2. has respect and confidence of others
      3. recognizes and credits skills of others
      4. coordinates well with other involved groups to get the job done

      | Item       | Related Examples |
      |------------|------------------|
      |            |                  |


Table 2 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

The critical incident method provides useful information for appraisal interviews, and managers and subordinates can discuss specific incidents. Good qualitative information is generated. However, because little quantitative data emerge,
it is difficult to use this technique for promotion or salary decisions. The qualitative output here has led some companies to combine the critical incident technique with one of the quantitative techniques, such as the rating scale, to provide different kinds of feedback to the employees.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales

An appraisal system that has received increasing attention in recent years is the behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS). This system requires considerable work prior to evaluation but, if the work is carefully done, can lead to highly accurate ratings with high inter-rater reliability. Specifically, the BARS technique begins by selecting a job that can be described in observable behaviors. Managers and personnel specialists then identify these behaviors as they relate to superior or inferior performance.

An example of this is shown in Figure 4, where the BARS technique has been applied to the job of college professor. As shown, as one moves from extremely poor performance to extremely good performance, the performance descriptions, or behavioral anchors, increase. Oftentimes, six to ten scales are used to describe performance on the job. Figure 4 evaluates the professor's organizational skills. Other scales could relate to the professor's teaching effectiveness, knowledge of the material, availability to students, and fairness in grading. Once these scales are determined, the evaluator has only to check the category that describes what she observes on the job, and the employee's rating is simultaneously determined. The BARS technique has several purported advantages. In particular, many of the sources of error discussed earlier (central tendency, leniency, halo) should be significantly reduced because raters are considering verbal descriptions of specific behaviors instead of general categories of behaviors, such as those used in graphic rating scales. In addition, the technique focuses on job-related behaviors and ignores less relevant issues such as the subordinate's personality, race, or gender. This technique should also lead to employees being less defensive during performance appraisals, because the focus of the discussion would be actual measured behaviors, not the person. Finally, BARS can aid in employee training and development by identifying those domains needing most attention.
Organizational skills: A good constructional order of material slides smoothly from one topic to another; design of course optimizes interest; students can easily follow organizational strategy; course outline is followed.

Follows course syllabus; presents lectures in a logical order; ties each lecture into the previous one

Prepares a course syllabus but follows it only occasionally; presents lectures in no particular order, though does tie them together

Makes no use of a course syllabus; lectures on topics randomly with no logical order

Figure 4 A Behaviorally Anchored Scale for Rating College Professors Source: Reprinted by permission of H. John Bernardin. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

On the negative side, as noted above, considerable time and effort in designing the forms are required before the actual rating. Because a separate BARS is required for each distinct job, it is only cost-efficient for common jobs. Finally, because the technique relies on observable behaviors, it may have little applicability for such jobs in such areas as research science (and sometimes management), where much of the work is mental and relevant observable behaviors are difficult to obtain.

Behavioral Observation Scales

The behavioral observation scale (BOS) is similar to BARS in that both focus on identifying observable behaviors as they relate to performance. It is, however, less demanding of the evaluator. Typically, the evaluator is asked to rate each behavior on a scale from 1 to 5 to indicate the frequency with which the employee exhibits the behavior. Evaluation of an employee's performance on a particular dimension is derived by summing the frequency ratings for the behaviors in each dimension.

For example, in Table 3 we can see an example of a form to evaluate a manager's ability to overcome resistance to change. The rater simply has to circle the appropriate numbers describing observed behaviors and get a summary rating by adding the results. The BOS technique is easier to construct than the BARS and makes the evaluator's job somewhat simpler. Even so, this is a relatively new technique that is only now receiving some support in industry.
Example of a Behavioral Observation Scale for Managers: Overcoming Resistance to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describes the details of the change to subordinates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explains why the change is necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discusses how the change will affect the employee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Listens to the employee's concerns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Asks the employee for help in making the change work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If necessary, specifies the date for a follow-up meeting to respond to employee's concerns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Management by Objectives

A popular technique for evaluating employees who are involved in jobs that have clear quantitative output is management by objectives (MBO). Although the concept of MBO encompasses much more than just the appraisal process (incorporating an organization-wide motivation, performance, and control system), we will focus here on its narrower application to evaluating employee performance. MBO is closely related to the goal-setting theory of motivation.

Under MBO, individual employees work with their supervisor to establish goals and objectives for which they will be responsible during the coming year. These goals are stated in clear language and relate to tasks that are within the domain of the employee. An example of these goals for a sales representative is shown in Table 4. Following a specified period of time, the employee's performance is compared to the preset goals to determine the extent to which the goals have been met or exceeded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals Categories</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Actual Performance</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of sales calls</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of new customers contacted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of customer complaints</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sales of product #1</td>
<td>10,000 units</td>
<td>11,000 units</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sales of product #2</td>
<td>15,000 units</td>
<td>14,000 units</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sales of product #3</td>
<td>25,000 units</td>
<td>30,000 units</td>
<td>120%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several advantages of MBO have been observed. These include the ability to do better planning; improved motivation, because of knowledge of results; fairer evaluations, done on the basis of results rather than personality; improved commitment through participation; and improved supervisory skills in such areas as listening, counseling, and
evaluating. On the negative side, however, MBO has been criticized because it emphasizes quantitative goals at the expense of qualitative goals and often creates too much paperwork. It is difficult to compare performance levels among employees because most are responsible for different goals. Sometimes the implementation of MBO goals are autocratic and therefore ineffective or even counterproductive. As discussed in the study of motivation, goals must be accepted to be effective. Finally, in order to be successful, MBO implementation must have constant attention and support from top management; MBO does not run itself. In the absence of this support, the technique loses legitimacy and often falls into disrepair.

Assessment Centers

A relatively new method of evaluation is the assessment center. Assessment centers are unique among appraisal techniques in that they focus more on evaluating an employee's long-range potential to an organization than on her performance over the past year. They are also unique in that they are used almost exclusively among managerial personnel.

An assessment center consists of a series of standardized evaluations of behavior based on multiple inputs. Over a two- or three-day period (away from the job), trained observers make judgments on managers' behavior in response to specially developed exercises. These exercises may consist of in-basket exercises, role-playing, and case analyses, as well as personal interviews and psychological tests. An example of an assessment center program is shown in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Two-Day Assessment Center Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00–9:00 A.M. Orientation session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 –10:30 A.M. Psychological testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30–10:45 A.M. Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45–12:30 P.M. Management simulation game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30–1:30 P.M. Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30 P.M. Individual decision-making exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15–3:30 P.M. Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30–4:30 P.M. Interview with raters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of these exercises, the trained observers make judgments on employees' potential for future managerial assignments in the organization. More specifically, information is obtained concerning employees' interpersonal skills, communication ability, creativity, problem-solving skills, tolerance for stress and ambiguity, and planning ability. This technique has been used successfully by some of the largest corporations in the United States, including AT&T, IBM, and General Electric.

Results from a series of assessment center programs appear promising, and the technique is growing in popularity as a means of identifying future managerial potential. For example, Coca-Cola USA experimented with using assessment centers to select its managerial personnel. After a detailed study, the company found that those selected in this way were only one-third as likely to leave the company or be fired than those selected in the traditional way. Although the assessment center approach added about 6 percent to the cost of hiring, the lower turnover rate led to large overall savings.

Some problems with the technique have been noted. In particular, because of the highly stressful environment created in assessment centers, many otherwise good managers may simply not perform to their potential. Moreover, the results...
of a poor evaluation in an assessment center may be far-reaching; individuals may receive a “loser” image that will follow them for a long time. And, finally, there is some question concerning exactly how valid and reliable assessment centers really are in predicting future managerial success. Despite these problems, assessment centers remain a popular vehicle in some companies for developing and appraising managerial potential.

ETHICS IN PRACTICE

Tesla's Performance Review

At Tesla, the automotive giant, the standards are set extremely high for their employees. In 2017, Tesla conducted its annual performance reviews as it does each year. Due to the review process, the company sees both voluntary and involuntary departures. During the review process, the managers discuss “results that were achieved, as well as how those results were achieved” with their employees.* Tesla also has a performance recognition and compensation program that includes equity rewards as well as promotions in some cases, along with the constructive feedback.

The departure of employees during the review period is not unique to Tesla; however, in 2017 there was a large exodus of approximately 700 employees following their employee reviews. Elon Musk, who recently has stepped down from the role of chairman and has been under scrutiny for his behavior,* saw the media coverage of this news as “ridiculous.”

“You have two boxes of equal ability, and one’s much smaller, the big guy’s going to crush the little guy, obviously,” states Musk. “So, the little guy better have a heck of a lot more skill or he’s going to get clobbered. So that is why our standards are high . . . if they’re not high, we will die.”

Overall, approximately 17 percent of their employees were promoted, almost half in manufacturing. As Tesla continues to grow and develop new vehicles, it is consistently pushing the boundaries and pushing its employees to new limits. Performance reviews are of the highest importance for Tesla's business to succeed; the company needs the best people with the best skills. It is constantly growing and attempting to “suck the labor pool dry” to fill positions at many of its locations and factories.

Questions

1. What factors do you feel could have changed in Tesla’s approach to its performance reviews?
2. How can a high-pressure environment affect an employee’s performance? What factors should be considered to combat these issues?

Comparison of Appraisal Techniques

It is important to consider which appraisal technique or set of techniques may be most appropriate for a given situation. Although there is no simple answer to this question, we can consider the various strengths and weaknesses of each
technique. This is done in Table 6. It is important to keep in mind that the appropriateness of a particular appraisal technique is in part a function of the purpose for the appraisal. For example, if the purpose of the appraisal is to identify high potential executives, then assessment centers are more appropriate than rating scales.

### Major Strengths and Weaknesses of Appraisal Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
<th>Critical Incidents</th>
<th>BARS</th>
<th>BOS</th>
<th>MBO</th>
<th>Assessment Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful dimensions</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time required</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development costs</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for rating errors</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability to subordinates</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability to superiors</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness for allocating rewards</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness for employee counseling</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness for identifying promotion potential</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

As would be expected, the easiest and least expensive techniques are also the least accurate. They are also the least useful for purposes of personnel decisions and employee development. Once again, it appears that managers and organizations get what they pay for. If performance appraisals represent an important aspect of organizational life, clearly the more sophisticated—and more time-consuming—techniques are preferable. If, on the other hand, it is necessary to evaluate employees quickly and with few resources, techniques such as the graphic rating scale may be more appropriate. Managers must make cost-benefit decisions about the price (in time and money) they are willing to pay for a quality performance appraisal system.

### CONCEPT CHECK

1. What are the techniques and scales used in performance appraisals?
2. What are MBOs, and how do they relate to performance appraisals?
3. What are assessment centers?

### Feedback

3. How do managers give effective feedback to subordinates?
As previously noted, feedback represents a critical variable in determining the success or failure of the goal-setting process. The same applies to the performance appraisal process. Without effective knowledge of results, the motivational impact of the appraisal process is lost. To better understand how feedback in work settings affects employee behavior, consider the model shown in Figure 5.

Feedback comes from many sources, including the task at hand, the supervisor, coworkers, and oneself. This input is then cognitively evaluated by the employee, who considers such factors as the perceived accuracy of the feedback (e.g., does the employee consider the information to be correct?); the credibility of the source of the feedback (e.g., does the employee trust the supervisor's opinion?); the employee's opinion concerning the fairness of the evaluation-process; the extent to which the feedback met the employee's expectations (e.g., does the employee think she could have done better?); and the reasonableness of the performance standards.

If one or more of these evaluations prove negative (for example, the employee believes she is being unfairly evaluated), the credibility of the feedback is dismissed, and the employee may increase her resistance to task effort. On the other hand, where the feedback is accepted, it reinforces the employee's direction, effort on the task, and persistence on the task. Thus, although feedback is essential, it is the nature and quality of the feedback that ultimately determines employee response.

CONCEPT CHECK

1. What types of feedback do performance appraisals provide to all organization members?
Reward Systems in Organizations

4. How do organizations choose the best appraisal system for their organization?

After a company has designed and implemented a systematic performance appraisal system and provided adequate feedback to employees, the next step is to consider how to tie available corporate rewards to the outcomes of the appraisal. Behavioral research consistently demonstrates that performance levels are highest when rewards are contingent upon performance. Thus, in this section, we will examine five aspects of reward systems in organizations: (1) functions served by reward systems, (2) bases for reward distribution, (3) intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards, (4) the relationship between money and motivation and, finally, (5) pay secrecy.

Functions of Reward Systems

Reward systems in organizations are used for a variety of reasons. It is generally agreed that reward systems influence the following:

- **Job effort and performance.** Following expectancy theory, employees' effort and performance would be expected to increase when they felt that rewards were contingent upon good performance. Hence, reward systems serve a very basic motivational function.
- **Attendance and retention.** Reward systems have also been shown to influence an employee's decision to come to work or to remain with the organization. This was discussed in the previous chapter.
- **Employee commitment to the organization.** It has been found that reward systems in no small way influence employee commitment to the organization, primarily through the exchange process. That is, employees develop ties with organizations when they perceive that the organization is interested in their welfare and willing to protect their interests. This exchange process is shown in Figure 6. To the extent that employee needs and goals are met by the company, we would expect commitment to increase.
- **Job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction has also been shown to be related to rewards, as discussed in the previous chapter. Edward E. Lawler, a well-known researcher on employee compensation, has identified four conclusions concerning the relationship between rewards and satisfaction: (1) satisfaction with a reward is a function of both how much is received and how much the individual feels should have been received; (2) satisfaction is influenced by comparisons with what happens to others, especially one's coworkers; (3) people differ with respect to the rewards they value; and (4) some rewards are satisfying because they lead to other rewards.
- **Occupational and organizational choice.** Finally, the selection of an occupation by an individual, as well as the decision to join a particular organization within that occupation, are influenced by the rewards that are thought to be available in the occupation or organization. To prove this, simply look at the classified section of your local newspaper and notice how many jobs highlight beginning salaries.
Reward systems in organizations have far-reaching consequences for both individual satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Unfortunately, cases can easily be cited where reward systems have been distorted to punish good performance or inhibit creativity. Consider, for example, the Greyhound Bus Company driver who was suspended for 10 days without pay for breaking a company rule against using a CB radio on his bus. The bus driver had used the radio to alert police that his bus, with 32 passengers on board, was being hijacked by an armed man. The police arrested the hijacker, and the bus driver was suspended for breaking company rules. Such incidents hardly encourage employees to focus their efforts on responsible performance.

**Bases for Reward Distribution**

A common reality in many contemporary work organizations is the inequity that exists in the distribution of available rewards. One often sees little correlation between those who perform well and those who receive the greatest rewards. At the extreme, it is hard to understand how a company could pay its president $10 to $20 million per year (as many large corporations do) while it pays its secretaries and clerks less than $15,000. Each works approximately 40 hours per week, and both are important for organizational performance. Is it really possible that the president is 1,000 times more important than the secretary, as the salary differential suggests?

How do organizations decide on the distribution of available rewards? At least four mechanisms can be identified. In
more cases than we choose to admit, rewards go to those with the greatest power (either market power or personal power). In many of the corporations whose presidents earn eight-figure incomes, we find that these same people are either major shareholders in the company or have certain abilities, connections, or status that the company wants. Indeed, a threat of resignation from an important or high-performing executive often leads to increased rewards.

A second possible basis for reward distribution is equality. Here, all individuals within one job classification would receive the same, or at least similar, rewards. The most common example here can be found among unionized workers, where pay rates are established and standardized with little or no reference to actual performance level. Instead of ability or performance, these systems usually recognize seniority as the key factor in pay raises or promotions.
What does a team appraisal look like?

How do we increase individual motivation through team appraisal?

Establish the metrics of what the goals are.

What happens when one or a few individuals carry the whole team?

How do you differentiate low, medium and outstanding performers?

How do you establish accountability?

The basis for the social welfare reward system in this country is need. In large part, the greater the need, the greater the level of support. It is not uncommon to see situations in business firms where need is taken into account in layoff situations—where an employee is not laid off because she is the sole support of a family.
A fourth mechanism used by organizations in allocating rewards is distributive justice. Under this approach, employees receive (at least a portion of) their rewards as a function of their level of contribution to the organization. The greater the contribution (such as performance), the greater the reward. This mechanism is most prominent in merit-based incentive programs, where pay and bonuses are determined by performance levels.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards

The variety of rewards that employees can receive in exchange for their contributions of time and effort can be classified as either extrinsic or intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards are external to the work itself. They are administered externally—that is, by someone else (usually management). Examples of extrinsic rewards include wages and salary, fringe benefits, promotions, and recognition and praise from others.

On the other hand, intrinsic rewards represent those rewards that are related directly to performing the job. In this sense, they are often described as “self-administered” rewards, because engaging in the task itself leads to their receipt. Examples of intrinsic rewards include feelings of task accomplishment, autonomy, and personal growth and development that come from the job.

In the literature on employee motivation, there is considerable controversy concerning the possible interrelationship of these two kinds of reward. It has been argued (with some research support) that extrinsic rewards tend to drive out the positive effects of some intrinsic rewards and can lead to unethical behavior. Consider, for example, the child next door who begs you to let her help you wash your car. For a young child, this task can carry considerable excitement (and intrinsic motivation). Now, consider what happens on a Saturday afternoon when you need your car washed but the child has other options. What do you do? You offer to pay her this time to help wash your car. What do you think will happen the next time you ask the neighbor to help you wash the car for free? In other words, when extrinsic rewards such as pay are tied closely to performance (called performance-reward contingency), intrinsic motivation—the desire to do a task because you enjoy it—can decrease.

Also, it is important to keep in mind that because extrinsic rewards are administered by sources external to the individual, their effectiveness rests on accurate and fair monitoring, evaluating, and administration. Implementation can be expensive, and the timing of performance and rewards may not always be close. For example, you may perform well on a task, but unless there is a way for that to be noticed, evaluated, recorded, and rewarded within a reasonable time frame, an extrinsic reward may not have a significant impact. Intrinsic rewards are a function of self-monitoring, evaluation, and administration; consequently, these rewards often are less costly and more effectively administered. For example, even if no one else notices or rewards you for superior performance on a task, you can still reward yourself with a mental pat on the back for a job well done or a sense of satisfaction for overcoming a challenge. The implications of this finding will become apparent when exploring efforts to enrich employees’ jobs.

Money and Motivation: A Closer Look

A recurring debate among managers focuses on the issue of whether money is a primary motivator. Some argue that most behavior in organizational settings is motivated by money (or at least monetary factors), whereas others argue that money is only one of many factors that motivate performance. Whichever group is correct, we must recognize that money can have important motivational consequences for many people in many situations. In fact, money serves several important functions in work settings. These include serving as (1) a goal or incentive, (2) a source of satisfaction, (3) an instrument for gaining other desired outcomes, (4) a standard of comparison for determining relative standing or worth, and (5) a conditional reinforcer where its receipt is contingent upon a certain level of performance. Even so, experience tells us that the effectiveness of pay as a motivator varies considerably. Sometimes there seems to be an almost direct
relationship between pay and effort, whereas at other times no such relationship is found. Why? Lawler suggests that certain conditions must be present in order for pay to act as a strong motivator:

- Trust levels between managers and subordinates must be high.
- Individual performance must be able to be accurately measured.
- Pay rewards to high performers must be substantially higher than those to poor performers.
- Few, if any, negative consequences for good performance must be perceived.

Under these conditions, a climate or culture is created in which employees have reason to believe that significant performance-reward contingencies truly exist. Given this perception (and assuming the reward is valued), we would expect performance to be increased.

Pay Secrecy

Secrecy about pay rates seems to be a widely accepted practice in work organizations, particularly among managerial personnel. It is argued that salary is a personal matter and we should not invade another's privacy. Available evidence, however, suggests that pay secrecy may have several negative side effects. To begin, it has been consistently found that in the absence of actual knowledge, people have a tendency to overestimate the pay of coworkers and those above them in the hierarchy. As a result, much of the motivational potential of a differential reward system is lost. Even if an employee receives a relatively sizable salary increase, she may still perceive an inequity compared to what others are receiving. This problem is highlighted in the results of a study by Lawler. In considering the effects of pay secrecy on motivation, Lawler noted:

Almost regardless of how well the individual manager was performing, he felt he was getting less than the average raise. This problem was particularly severe among high performers, since they believed that they were doing well yet received minimal reward. They did not believe that pay was in fact based upon merit. This was ironic, since their pay did reflect performance. . . . Thus, even though pay was tied to performance, these managers were not motivated because they could not see the connection.

Pay secrecy also affects motivation via feedback. Several studies have shown the value of feedback in motivating performance (see previous discussion). The problem is that for managers, money represents one of the most meaningful forms of feedback. Pay secrecy eliminates the feedback.

When salary information is open (or at least when the range of percentage increases within a job classification are made known to the people in that group), employees are generally provided with more recognition for satisfactory performance and are often more motivated to perform on subsequent tasks. It is easier to establish feelings of pay equity and trust in the salary administration system. On the other hand, publicizing pay rates and pay raises can cause jealousy among employees and create pressures on managers to reduce perceived inequities in the system. There is no correct position concerning whether pay rates should be secret or open. The point is that managers should not assume a priori that pay secrecy—or pay openness—is a good thing. Instead, careful consideration should be given to the possible consequences of either approach in view of the particular situation in the organization at the time.
CONCEPT CHECK

1. What is the best appraisal system for organizations to adopt?
2. How are rewards tied to performance appraisals?

Individual and Group Incentive Plans

5. How do managers and organizations use incentives and rewards effectively to secure the best possible performance from employees?

We now turn to an examination of various employee incentive programs used by organizations. First, we consider the relative merits of individuals versus group incentive programs. Next, we focus on several relatively new approaches to motivation and compensation. Finally, we suggest several guidelines for effective incentive systems.

Individual versus Group Incentives

Companies usually have choices among various compensation plans and must make decisions about which is most effective for its situation. Incentive systems in organizations are usually divided into two categories on the basis of whether the unit of analysis—and the recipient of the reward—is the individual or a group. Among individual incentive plans, several approaches can be identified, including merit-based compensation (commonly known as merit compensation), piece-rate incentive programs (where people are paid according to the quantity of output), bonus systems of various sorts, and commissions. In each case, rewards are tied fairly directly to the performance level of the individual.

Although individual incentive systems often lead to improved performance, some reservations have been noted. In particular, these programs may at times lead to employees competing with one another, with undesirable results. For instance, department store salespeople on commission may fight over customers, thereby chasing the customers away. After all, customers don't care who they deal with, only that the service is good. Second, these plans typically are resisted by unions, which prefer compensation to be based on seniority or job classification. Third, where quality control systems are lax, individual incentives such as piece rates may lead employees to maximize units of output while sacrificing quality. And, finally, in order for these programs to be successful, an atmosphere of trust and cooperation is necessary.

In order to overcome some of these shortcomings, many companies have turned to group or organizational incentive plans. Group incentive programs base at least some of an employee's rewards on group or organization performance. Hence, employees are encouraged to cooperate with one another and with the corporation so that all employees can benefit. Programs such as profit-sharing or gain-sharing plans (discussed below) are designed to tie the employees' future rewards and prosperity to that of the company and reduce the age-old antagonism between the two. The results are often dramatic.
Creative Pay Practices

Recently, we have seen several innovations in the way corporations approach reward systems. These efforts are designed to facilitate the integration of employee and company interests in a way that maximizes both productivity and quality of working life. Five such creative pay practices should be noted: (1) gain-sharing plans, (2) skills-based incentives, (3) lump-sum pay increases, (4) participative pay decisions, and (5) flexible benefits programs. These approaches, along with their major advantages and drawbacks, are summarized in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Practice</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain sharing</td>
<td>Ties pay to performance; encourages group cooperation</td>
<td>Plans that focus exclusively on productivity may lead employees to ignore other important objectives, such as quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills-based incentives</td>
<td>More flexible and skilled workforce; increased satisfaction</td>
<td>Higher training and salary costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lump-sum increase</td>
<td>Greater visibility of pay increases; increased pay satisfaction</td>
<td>Cost of administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative pay decisions</td>
<td>Increased trust in a satisfaction with pay decisions; better pay decisions</td>
<td>Time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible benefits</td>
<td>Increased satisfaction with pay and benefits</td>
<td>Cost of administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

**Gain-Sharing Plans.** Giving executives and senior managers bonuses to reflect their contributions to organizational effectiveness is commonplace. In fact, in some companies executive bonuses are often larger than salaries. Recently, companies have increasingly applied this same principle to all employees in the form of **gain-sharing** (profit-sharing) plans. Here, employees are given a chance to share in corporate productivity gains through increased earnings. The greater the productivity gains, the greater the earnings. Several variations on this theme can be found, including the Scanlon Plan, IMPROSHARE, the Ruker Plan, and the Lincoln Electric Plan. Regardless of the title, the basic plan is similar.

For example, under the Scanlon Plan (probably the oldest such program), three operating guidelines are used: (1) each department or division is treated as a business unit for purposes of performance measurement, (2) specific cost measures associated with the production process are identified and agreed to by all parties, and (3) bonuses are paid to all employees according to a predetermined formula tying the amount of the bonus to the actual cost savings realized during the time period. Under such a plan, it is clearly in the employees' best interest to contribute to cost savings, thereby increasing their own incomes.

EXPANDING AROUND THE GLOBE

**Providing Feedback in Different Countries**

Global workplaces are increasing within the world businesses, and it has become a trend to have managers from one country, most likely the country in which the headquarters arise, manage employees abroad. An important consideration when managing globally is how cultural differences can have a profound effect on performance evaluations, negotiations, and criticisms.

For example, oftentimes in the United States, a method of critical feedback in the "hamburger method" (Step 1: Identify
tasks. As a group, identify technical steps that would be involved in implementing. Step 2: Identify options for tasks. Split
the team into several small groups. Step 3: Combine results.) is acceptable, while other countries give their feedback
with just the meal alone. This strategy in the Netherlands and Germany can be off-putting to other cultures, and when
you read into another culture's technique with your own lens of reference, it can feel wrong.

Managing globally means that you need to do your research on which approach for feedback is best received for
the employee's cultural differences. For example, being direct is key when communicating with a Dutch person. In
contrast, in England or the United States, criticism is not delivered directly, but with positive pieces wrapped around
the negative. In Asian countries, feedback is often avoided or the message is blurred in order to “save face.” With all
of these complications and considerations, it is ever more important to acutely understand the culture, the cultural
understandings of employees who are direct reports, and also the lens through which feedback is being viewed as well.

Questions:

1. How can a new manager that is working with international employees ensure she is providing reviews
   in an appropriate manner?
2. What methods can a manager employ in her preparation for the review to be successful when
   providing feedback to employees of different cultures?

Skills-Based Incentives. Typical compensation programs are tied to job evaluations. In these, jobs are analyzed to assess
their characteristics, and then salary levels are assigned to each job on the basis of factors such as job difficulty and
labor market scarcity. In other words, pay levels are set on the basis of the job, not the individual. This approach fails to
courage employees to improve their skills on the job, because there is no reward for the improvement. This thinking
also keeps all employees in their places and minimizes the possibility of inter-job transfers.

Under the skills-based incentive program, employees are paid according to their skills level (that is, the number
of jobs they can perform), regardless of the actual tasks they are allowed to perform. This approach has proved successful
in organizations such as Procter & Gamble and General Foods. Employees are encouraged to learn additional skills
and are appropriately rewarded. The organization is provided with a more highly trained and more flexible workforce.
However, training and compensation costs are necessarily increased, so the program is appropriate only in some
situations. The technique is most often seen as part of a larger quality-of-working-life program, where it is associated
with job redesign efforts.

Lump-Sum Pay Increases. Another technique that has received some attention is to allow employees to decide how
(that is, in what amounts) they wish to receive their pay raises for the coming year. Under the traditional program,
pay raises are paid in equal amounts in each paycheck over the year. Under the alternate plan, employees can elect to
receive equal amounts during the year, or they can choose to take the entire raise in one lump-sum pay increase. This
plan allows employees greater discretion over their own financial matters. If an employee wants to use the entire pay
raise for a vacation, it can be paid in a lump sum in June. Then, if the employee quits before the end of the year, the
unearned part of the pay raise is subtracted from the final paycheck. This plan increases the visibility of the reward
to the employee. The employee receives, for example, a $600 pay raise (a rather sizable amount) instead of twelve $50
monthly pay raises. As with the flexible rewards system discussed below, however, the administration costs of the lump-
sum plan are greater than those of the traditional method.

Participative Pay Decisions. In addition, of concern to many managers is the extent to which employees should be
involved in decisions over pay raises. This is the issue of participative pay decisions. Recently, several organizations have been experimenting with involving employees in pay raise decisions, and the results seem to be quite positive. By allowing employees to participate either in the design of the reward system or in actual pay raise decisions (perhaps through a committee), it is argued that decisions of higher quality are made on the basis of greater information. Also, employees then have greater reason to place confidence in the fairness of the decisions. On the negative side, this approach requires considerably more time for both the manager and the participating subordinates. Costs must be weighed against benefits to determine which approach is most suitable for the particular organization and its goals.

Flexible Benefits Systems. A typical fringe benefit package provides the same benefits—and the same number of benefits—to all employees. As a result, individual differences or preferences are largely ignored. Studies by Lawler indicate variations in benefit preferences. For instance, young unmarried men prefer more vacation time, whereas young married men prefer to give up vacation time for higher pay. Older employees want more retirement benefits, whereas younger employees prefer greater income. Through a flexible benefits program (also called a “cafeteria benefits program”), employees are allowed some discretion in the determination of their own packages and can make trade-offs, within certain limits. Organizations such as PepsiCo, TRW, and the Educational Testing Service already use such programs. Although certain problems of administration exist with the programs, efforts in this direction can lead to increased need satisfaction among employees.

Which approaches are most effective in motivating employees? This is obviously a difficult question to answer. One such study asked major employers which of a variety of approaches had been used with a high success level. The results are shown in Table 8. Skills-based compensation, earned time off, and gain sharing all received high marks from personnel executives, although other programs are also widely supported. It would appear from these results that many approaches can be useful; the choice of which one to use would depend upon the circumstances and goals of a particular organization.

Guidelines for Effective Incentive Programs

Whatever incentive plan is selected, care must be taken to ensure that the plan is appropriate for the particular organization and workforce. In fact, a simple test of the effectiveness of an incentive plan would be as follows:

- Does the plan capture attention? Do employees discuss the plan and take pride in their early successes?
- Do employees understand the plan? Can employees explain how the plan works, and do they understand what they must do to earn the incentive?
- Does the plan improve communication? As a result of the plan, do employees understand more about corporate mission, goals, and objectives?
- Does the plan pay out when it should? Are incentives being paid for desired results, and are they withheld for undesirable results?
- Is the company performing better as a result of the plan? Are profits or market share up or down? Have any gains resulted in part from the incentive plan?
Companies Successfully Using Creative Incentive Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Incentive</th>
<th>Percent of Companies Reporting Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills-based compensation</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned time off</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain-sharing plans</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-group incentives</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual incentives</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-salaried workforce</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lump-sum bonus</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data adapted from J. Horn, *Psychology Today*, July 1987, pp. 54–57.*

If a new (or existing) pay plan can meet these tests, it is probably fairly effective in motivating employee performance and should be retained by the organization. If not, perhaps some other approach should be tried. On the basis of such a test, several specific guidelines can be identified to increase the effectiveness of the programs. These include the following:

- Any reward system or incentive plan should be as closely tied to actual job performance as possible. This point was discussed earlier in this chapter.
- If possible, incentive programs should allow for individual differences. They should recognize that different people want different outcomes from a job. Flexible benefits programs such as the ones discussed here make an effort to accomplish this.
- Incentive programs should reflect the type of work that is done and the structure of the organization. This simply means that the program should be tailored to the particular needs, goals, and structures of a given organization. Individual incentive programs, for example, would probably be less successful among unionized personnel than would group programs such as the Scanlon plan. This point has been clearly demonstrated in research by Lawler, which points out that organizations with traditional management and those with more participative management might approach reward systems quite differently in order to be effective. As shown in Table 9, both types of company can be effective as long as their reward systems are congruent with their overall approach to management.
- The incentive program should be consistent with the culture and constraints of the organization. Where trust levels are low, for example, it may take considerable effort to get any program to work. In an industry already characterized by high levels of efficiency, basing an incentive system on increasing efficiency even further may have little effect, because employees may see the task as nearly impossible.
- Finally, incentive programs should be carefully monitored over time to ensure that they are being fairly administered and that they accurately reflect current technological and organizational conditions. For instance, it may be appropriate to offer sales clerks in a department store an incentive to sell outdated merchandise because current fashion items sell themselves. Responsibility falls on managers not to select the incentive program that is in vogue or used “next door,” but rather to consider the unique situations and needs of their own organizations. Then, with this understanding, a program can be developed and implemented that will facilitate goal-oriented performance.
### Matching Reward Systems to Management Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reward System</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Participative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fringe benefits</td>
<td>Vary according to organizational level</td>
<td>Cafeteria—same for all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>All decisions made by top management</td>
<td>Open posting for all jobs; peer group involvement in decision process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status symbols</td>
<td>A great many, carefully allocated on the basis of job position</td>
<td>Few present, low emphasis on organization level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay type</td>
<td>Hourly and salary</td>
<td>All salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base rate</td>
<td>Based on job performed; high enough to attract job applicants</td>
<td>Based on skills; high enough to provide security and attract applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive plan</td>
<td>Piece rate</td>
<td>Group and organization-wide bonus, lump-sum increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication policy</td>
<td>Very restricted distribution of information</td>
<td>Individual rates, salary survey data, all other information made public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making locus</td>
<td>Top management</td>
<td>Close to location of person whose pay is being set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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### Concept Check

1. What are the differences between individual and group incentives?
2. What is the variety of reward incentives available to organizations?

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### Key Terms

**Central tendency error**

The failure to recognize either very good or very poor performers.

**Halo effect**

Results in a supervisor assigning the same rating to each factor being evaluated for an individual.

**Leniency error**

fails to distinguish adequately between good and bad performers and instead relegates almost everyone to the same or related categories.

**Performance appraisals**

A system that provides a means of systematically evaluating employees across various performance dimensions to ensure that organizations are getting what they pay for.

**Recency error**

Occurs when, in an evaluation, a supervisor may give undue emphasis to performance during the past months—or
Reliability
The extent to which the instrument consistently yields the same results each time it is used.

Validity
The extent to which an instrument actually measures what it intends to measure.

Strictness error
Fails to distinguish adequately between good and bad performers and instead relegates almost everyone to the same or related categories.

Assessment center
Consists of a series of standardized evaluations of behavior based on multiple inputs.

Behaviorally anchored rating scale
A system that requires considerable work prior to evaluation but, if the work is carefully done, can lead to highly accurate ratings with high inter-rater reliability.

Behavioral observation scale
Identifies observable behaviors as they relate to performance and is less demanding of the evaluator.

Critical incident technique
A technique where supervisors record incidents, or examples, of each subordinate's behavior that led to either unusual success or unusual failure on some aspect of the job.

Graphic rating scale
A performance appraisal technique where the supervisor or rater is typically presented with a printed or online form that contains both the employee's name and several evaluation dimensions (quantity of work, quality of work, knowledge of job, attendance). The rater is then asked to rate the employee by assigning a number or rating on each of the dimensions.

Management by objectives
Closely related to the goal-setting theory of motivation.

Distributive justice
Where employees receive (at least a portion of) their rewards as a function of their level of contribution to the organization.

Extrinsic rewards
Rewards that are external to the work itself.

Intrinsic motivation
The desire to do a task because you enjoy it.

Intrinsic rewards
Rewards that are external to the work itself.

Skills-based incentives
Rewards employees on the basis of the skills they possess and not just the skills they are allowed to use at work.

Flexible benefits system
A rewards program where employees are allowed some discretion in the determination of their own packages and can make trade-offs, within certain limits.

Gain sharing
An incentive plan in which employees or customers receive benefits directly as a result of cost-saving measures that they initiate or participate in.

Lump-sum pay increase
A technique that allows employees to decide how (that is, in what amounts) they wish to receive their pay raises for the coming year.

Participative pay decisions
Involving employees in pay raise decisions.

SUMMARY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES
Performance Appraisal Systems

1. How do organizations effectively use performance appraisals to improve individual job performance, and what are the limitations inherent in the use of various appraisal systems?

If performance is to be changed or improved, it must be rewarded. To be rewarded, it must be measured. However, great care must be taken to (1) measure important behaviors and outcomes (individual, group, or organizational) and not just those that are easy to measure, (2) measure them with the appropriate technique(s), and (3) tie appropriate rewards to the desired behaviors and outcomes.

Organizations use performance appraisals for several reasons: (1) to provide feedback to employees, (2) to allow for employee self-development, (3) to allocate rewards, (4) to gather information for personnel decisions, and (5) to guide them in developing training and development efforts.

Techniques of Performance Appraisal

2. What practices are used in the performance appraisal process?

Performance appraisals are subject to several problems, including central tendency error, strictness or leniency error, halo effect, recency error, and personal biases.

Feedback

3. How do managers give effective feedback to subordinates?

Among the most common appraisal systems are graphic rating scales, critical incident technique, behaviorally anchored rating scales, behavioral observation scales, management by objectives, and assessment centers. Assessment centers represent a special case of evaluations in that they focus on assessing an employee's long-term potential to an organization.

Reward Systems in Organizations

4. How do organizations choose the best appraisal system for their organization?

Rewards serve several functions, including (1) stimulating job effort and performance, (2) reducing absenteeism and turnover, (3) enhancing employee commitment, (4) facilitating job satisfaction, and (5) facilitating occupational and organizational choice.

Rewards may be distributed on the basis of power, equality, need, or distributive justice. Distributive justice rests on the principle of allocating rewards in proportion to employee contribution. Intrinsic rewards represent those outcomes that are administered by the employee (e.g., a sense of task accomplishment), whereas extrinsic rewards are administered by others (e.g., wages).

Gain-sharing incentive plans base some of the employees' pay on corporate profits or productivity. As a result, employees are generally more interested in facilitating corporate performance. Skills-based incentives reward
employees on the basis of the skills they possess, not the skills they are allowed to use at work. As a result, employees are encouraged to continually upgrade their skill levels.

A lump-sum salary increase simply provides employees with their pay raises at one time (possibly shortly before summer vacation or a major holiday).

Participative pay decisions allow employees some input in determining their pay raises.

## Individual and Group Incentive Plans

5. How do managers and organizations use incentives and rewards effectively to secure the best possible performance from employees?

Flexible benefits allow employees to choose the fringe benefits that best suit their needs.

A good reward system (1) is closely tied to performance, (2) allows for individual differences, (3) reflects the type of work that is being done, (4) is consistent with the corporate culture, and (5) is carefully monitored over time.

### Chapter Review Questions

1. Identify the various functions of performance appraisals. How are appraisals used in most work organizations?
2. What are some problems associated with performance appraisals?
3. Define validity and reliability. Why are these two concepts important from a managerial standpoint?
4. How can errors in appraisals be reduced?
5. Critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the various techniques of performance appraisal.
6. Discuss the role of feedback in employee performance.
7. What is the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards?
8. Identify the major bases of reward distribution.
9. How does money influence employee motivation?
10. Discuss the relative merits of individual and group incentive programs.
11. Describe the benefits and drawbacks of several of the new approaches to reward systems. Which ones do you feel would be most effective in work organizations?
Management Skills Application Exercises

**How Would You Rate Your Supervisor?**

Instructions: Think of your current supervisor or one for any job you have held, and evaluate her on the following dimensions. Give a “1” for very poor, a “3” for average, a “5” for outstanding, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your boss's knowledge of the job</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your boss's leadership skills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your boss's communication skills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Your boss's ability to motivate subordinates</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your boss's attendance and promptness</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Your boss's commitment to the organization</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Your boss's long-term potential for promotion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What is your overall assessment of your supervisor?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think of a current or previous job, and evaluate the source and quality of the feedback you received from your supervisor. When you are through, refer to Appendix B for scoring procedures.
How Much Feedback Are You Getting from Your Job?

Instructions: Think of a current or previous job. With this in mind, answer the following questions as accurately as possible.

1. My boss lets me know when I make a mistake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. My coworkers help me improve on the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I receive formal evaluations from the company on my job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. My boss always tells me when I do a good job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. This company really appreciates good performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. When I do something especially well, I receive a “thanks” from my boss.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
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7. My coworkers are very appreciative when I do a good job.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>5 6 7</td>
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8. My coworkers compliment me on the quality of my work.
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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9. My coworkers are very supportive of my efforts.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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10. I know when I have done a good job.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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11. My job provides me with solid feedback on my performance.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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12. I can see the results when I learn to do something better.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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Sources:


SECTION IV
GROUP & TEAM THEORY

This section overviews the important theories that guide group and team interaction.
14. Power in Teams and Groups

From OpenStax, Download for free at OpenStax.

Introduction

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. How do power bases work in organizational life?
2. How do you recognize and account for the exercise of counterpower and make appropriate use of strategic contingencies in interunit or interorganizational relations?
3. How do managers cope effectively with organizational politics?
4. How do you recognize and limit inappropriate or unethical political behavior where it occurs?
Power Play at General Electric

For years, General Electric has been the pillar of manufacturing standards and stood as an icon for the American economy. Despite its strong history, CEO woes and a power struggle from within during the past few years have started to unravel the company's control.

Jeff Immelt, long-time CEO, was respected and revered for his discipline. However, this mentality took its toll and led to declines and complacency. The struggling company wanted change and desperately needed growth; it appointed John Flannery. Shortly after the appointment of Flannery, the new CEO pulled a change of his own as well—firing half of the company's board.

This type of move was almost unheard of, and the purge as presented was planning to cut dividends and slash less profitable business lines. The pressure from investors was felt immediately by Flannery, and this move was a desperate attempt to regain some footing and remain atop the industry standard.

Fast forward to 2018: after only one year on the job, the board decided it was done waiting for the turnaround and took drastic action, ousting Flannery and absorbing $23 billion in loss from the process.

The tumultuous and fast-paced changing tech-dominated economy of the 21st century showcases the harsh realities in this GE change of power. “The market didn't even give the company the benefit of the doubt that things would work,” said Ivan Feinseth, chief investment officer at Tigress Financial Partners. “Flannery's plan hasn't worked.” The market favors tech companies such as Google and Amazon rather than traditional manufacturers. And the new CEO, Lawrence Culp, will have an uphill battle to take over all of the woes of GE. As the first outsider to take over leadership, he has a lot to prove as well. His successes at Danaher preceded him and the company's stock has soared since the change occurred, already showing a positive impact.


Although the circumstances of the changes in leadership at GE may be unique, the exercise of power and political behavior in organizations is certainly not. Power and politics are the lifeblood of most organizations, and, as a result, informed managers need to understand power dynamics. In fact, organizations are composed of coalitions and alliances of different parties that continually compete for available resources. As such, a major influence on how decisions are made is the distribution of power among the decision makers. Unequal distribution of power in organizations can have a critical impact on many aspects of work life, including employee motivation, job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover, and stress. Hence, an awareness of the nature and pervasiveness of power and politics is essential for a better understanding of these other behavioral processes.

The concept of power is closely related to the concepts of authority and leadership. It is important to understand when one method of influence ceases and another begins. For example, when does a manager stop using legitimate authority in a work situation and start using unauthorized power?

Finally, on an individual level, many people attempt to exercise influence in organizations by using power tactics. An
awareness of such tactics helps managers to recognize them and to take appropriate actions. Keep in mind that attempts by others to exercise power do not have to be successful. Knowledge of these strategies gives a manager greater latitude in his response to power plays by others.

1 Power in Interpersonal Relations

In this chapter, we will examine various aspects of power and politics in organizations, beginning with the topic of power in interpersonal relations. Here, power is defined and distinguished from the related concepts of authority and leadership, and several bases of power and aspects of power dependency are discussed. Although these aspects of power also relate to group situations, they are more germane to interpersonal relations.

What Is Power?

Numerous definitions of power abound in the literature on organizations. One of the earliest was suggested by Max Weber, the noted German sociologist, who defined power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance." Similarly, Emerson wrote, "The power of actor A over actor B is the amount of resistance on the part of B which can be potentially overcome by A." Following these and other definitions, we will define power for our purposes as an interpersonal relationship in which one individual (or group) has the ability to cause another individual (or group) to take an action that would not be taken otherwise.

In other words, power involves one person changing the behavior of another. It is important to note that in most organizational situations, we are talking about implied force to comply, not necessarily actual force. That is, person A has power over person B if person B believes that person A can, in fact, force person B to comply.

Power, Authority, and Leadership

Clearly, the concept of power is closely related to the concepts of authority and leadership (see Figure 2). In fact, power has been referred to by some as “informal authority,” whereas authority has been called “legitimate power.” However, these three concepts are not the same, and important differences among the three should be noted.

As stated previously, power represents the capacity of one person or group to secure compliance from another person or group. Nothing is said here about the right to secure compliance—only the ability. In contrast, authority represents the right to seek compliance by others; the exercise of authority is backed by legitimacy. If a manager instructs a secretary to type certain letters, he presumably has the authority to make such a request. However, if the same manager asked the secretary to run personal errands, this would be outside the bounds of the legitimate exercise of authority. Although the secretary may still act on this request, the secretary’s compliance would be based on power or influence considerations, not authority. Hence, the exercise of authority is based on group acceptance of someone’s right to exercise legitimate control.

Finally, leadership is the ability of one individual to elicit responses from another person that go beyond required or mechanical compliance. It is this voluntary aspect of leadership that sets it apart from power and authority. Hence, we often differentiate between headship and leadership. A department head may have the right to require certain actions, whereas a leader has the ability to inspire certain actions. Although both functions may be served by the same individual, such is clearly not always the case.
Bases of Power

Although useful for comparative analysis of divergent organizations, this model may have limited applicability, because most business and public organizations rest largely on utilitarian power. Instead, a second model, developed by French and Raven, of the bases of power may be more helpful. They identified five primary ways in which power can be exerted in social situations.

Referent Power. In some cases, person B looks up to or admires person A, and, as a result, B follows A largely because of A’s personal qualities, characteristics, or reputation. In this case, A can use referent power to influence B. Referent power has also been called charismatic power, because allegiance is based on interpersonal attraction of one individual for another. Examples of referent power can be seen in advertising, where companies use celebrities to recommend their products; it is hoped that the star appeal of the person will rub off on the products. In work environments, junior managers often emulate senior managers and assume unnecessarily subservient roles more because of personal admiration than because of respect for authority.

Expert Power. Expert power is demonstrated when person A gains power because A has knowledge or expertise relevant to B. For instance, professors presumably have power in the classroom because of their mastery of a particular subject matter. Other examples of expert power can be seen in staff specialists in organizations (e.g., accountants, labor relations managers, management consultants, and corporate attorneys). In each case, the individual has credibility in a particular—and narrow—area as a result of experience and expertise, and this gives the individual power in that domain.

Legitimate Power. Legitimate power exists when person B submits to person A because B feels that A has a right to exert power in a certain domain. Legitimate power is really another name for authority, as explained earlier. A supervisor has a right, for instance, to assign work. Legitimate power differs from reward and coercive power in that it depends on the official position a person holds, and not on his or her relationship with others.

Reward Power: Reward power exists when person A has power over person B because A controls rewards that B wants. These rewards can cover a wide array of possibilities, including pay raises, promotions, desirable job assignments, more responsibility, new equipment, and so forth. Research has indicated that reward power often leads to increased job performance as employees see a strong performance-reward contingency. However, in many organizations, supervisors and managers really do not control very many rewards. For example, salary and promotion among most blue-collar workers is based on a labor contract, not a performance appraisal.

Coercive Power: Coercive power is based primarily on fear. Here, person A has power over person B because A can administer some form of punishment to B. Thus, this kind of power is also referred to as punishment power. As Kipnis points out, coercive power does not have to rest on the threat of violence. “Individuals exercise coercive power through a reliance upon physical strength, verbal facility, or the ability to grant or withhold emotional support from others. These bases provide the individual with the means to physically harm, bully, humiliate, or deny love to others.” Examples of coercive power in organizations include the ability (actual or implied) to fire or demote people, transfer them to undesirable jobs or locations, or strip them of valued perquisites. Indeed, it has been suggested that a good deal of organizational behavior (such as prompt attendance, looking busy, avoiding whistle-blowing) can be attributed to coercive, not reward, power. As Kipnis explains, “Of all the bases of power available to man, the power to hurt others is possibly the most often used, most often condemned and most difficult to control.”

Behavioral Consequences of Power

We have seen, then, that at least five bases of power can be identified. In each case, the power of the individual rests on a particular attribute of the power holder, the follower, or their relationship. In some cases (e.g., reward power), power rests in the superior; in others (e.g., referent power), power is given to the superior by the subordinate. In all cases, the exercise of power involves subtle and sometimes threatening interpersonal consequences for the parties involved. In fact, when power is exercised, employees have several ways in which to respond. These are shown in Figure 3.
If the subordinate accepts and identifies with the leader, his behavioral response will probably be one of commitment. That is, the subordinate will be motivated to follow the wishes of the leader. This is most likely to happen when the person in charge uses referent or expert power. Under these circumstances, the follower believes in the leader’s cause and will exert considerable energies to help the leader succeed.

A second possible response is compliance. This occurs most frequently when the subordinate feels the leader has either legitimate power or reward power. Under such circumstances, the follower will comply, either because it is perceived as a duty or because a reward is expected; but commitment or enthusiasm for the project is lacking. Finally, under conditions of coercive power, subordinates will more than likely use resistance. Here, the subordinate sees little reason—either altruistic or material—for cooperating and will often engage in a series of tactics to defeat the leader’s efforts.

Power Dependencies

In any situation involving power, at least two persons (or groups) can be identified: (1) the person attempting to influence others and (2) the target or targets of that influence. Until recently, attention focused almost exclusively on how people tried to influence others. Only recently has attention been given to how people try to nullify or moderate such influence attempts. In particular, we now recognize that the extent to which influence attempts are successful is determined in large part by the power dependencies of those on the receiving end of the influence attempts. In other words, all people are not subject to (or dependent upon) the same bases of power. What causes some people to be vulnerable to power attempts? At least three factors have been identified:

- **Subordinate’s Values.** To begin, person B’s values can influence his susceptibility to influence. For example, if the outcomes that A can influence are important to B, then B is more likely to be open to influence than if the outcomes
were unimportant. Hence, if an employee places a high value on money and believes the supervisor actually controls pay raises, we would expect the employee to be highly susceptible to the supervisor's influence. We hear comments about how young people don't really want to work hard anymore. Perhaps a reason for this phenomenon is that some young people don't place a high value on those things (for example, money) that traditionally have been used to influence behavior. In other words, such complaints may really be saying that young people are more difficult to influence than they used to be.

**Nature of Relationship Between A and B.** In addition, the nature of the relationship between A and B can be a factor in power dependence. Are A and B peers or superior and subordinate? Is the job permanent or temporary? A person on a temporary job, for example, may feel less need to acquiesce, because he won't be holding the position for long. Moreover, if A and B are peers or good friends, the influence process is likely to be more delicate than if they are superior and subordinate.

**Counterpower.** Finally, a third factor to consider in power dependences is counterpower. The concept of counterpower focuses on the extent to which B has other sources of power to buffer the effects of A's power. For example, if B is unionized, the union's power may serve to negate A's influence attempts. The use of counterpower can be clearly seen in a variety of situations where various coalitions attempt to bargain with one another and check the power of their opponents.

**Figure 4** presents a rudimentary model that combines the concepts of bases of power with the notion of power dependencies. As can be seen, A's bases of power interact with B's extent of power dependency to determine B's response to A's influence attempt. If A has significant power and B is highly dependent, we would expect B to comply with A's wishes.

![Figure 4 Typical Response Patterns in Dyadic Power Relationships (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)](image)

If A has more modest power over B, but B is still largely power dependent, B may try to bargain with A. Despite the fact that B would be bargaining from a point of weakness, this strategy may serve to protect B's interests better than outright compliance. For instance, if your boss asked you to work overtime, you might attempt to strike a deal whereby you would get compensatory time off at a later date. If successful, although you would not have decreased your working hours, at least you would not have increased them. Where power distribution is more evenly divided, B may attempt...
to develop a cooperative working relationship with A in which both parties gain from the exchange. An example of this position is a labor contract negotiation where labor-management relations are characterized by a balance of power and a good working relationship.

If B has more power than A, B will more than likely reject A's influence attempt. B may even become the aggressor and attempt to influence A. Finally, when B is not certain of the power relationships, he may simply try to ignore A's efforts. In doing so, B will discover either that A does indeed have more power or that A cannot muster the power to be successful. A good illustration of this last strategy can be seen in some companies’ responses to early governmental efforts to secure equal opportunities for minorities and women. These companies simply ignored governmental efforts until new regulations forced compliance.

Examples

MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

Administrative Assistants: The Power Behind the Throne

It is relatively easy to see the power of managers. They often have the ability to hire and fire, make important decisions, sign contracts, spend money, and so forth. They are, in fact, powerful entities within a corporation. What may be less apparent, however, is the power that managers’ executive or administrative assistants (EA) often have. In fact, if you want to discover just how powerful secretaries are, think of what would happen if they were not there. Most paperwork would not get done, many important decisions would not be made, and the organization would eventually grind to a halt.

The EA is intertwined with a very important piece of privileged information and requires the person to be highly detail oriented and have incredible soft skills and to be more than just technologically savvy. Many tech companies are paying top dollar to procure the right person for the job. Base salaries for executive assistants in the Bay area have been reportedly starting at $80–100K base.

Highly skilled EAs have become increasingly hard to recruit and retain, causing their power to increase. Despite the salary, there is often a negative connotation with the role of “assistant.” “There's definitely a stigma” about the title, says 32-year-old Shana Larson, one of four EAs at Pinterest, the San Francisco visual discovery company. But for Shana, who holds a master's degree from the University of Southern California, after the initial transition period, she felt that it was the best career decision to make—a long-term career with growth opportunities.

EAs represent a true example of counterpower within the organization. Yes, their bosses have power over them; but at the same time, they have considerable power over their bosses. Secretaries—the word is derived from the Latin word meaning “keeper of secrets”—are often privy to considerable confidential information. They routinely handle private calls, correspondence, and reports. They often serve as the manager's sounding board for new ideas, and they more than likely know how the boss feels about coworkers and superiors. This knowledge, along with stereotypes, stigmas, and increased scarcity, gives high-quality EAs considerable leverage in dealing with their bosses and their organizations.

Questions:
1. As a new manager who receives an assistant, what are important considerations to consider when starting in the role?
2. What other stigmas or stereotypes can occur with support roles in the workplace? How does this affect your personal feelings about taking a support role for a company in the future?
3. Why is it important for CEOs and other organizational powers to understand the innate power of an administrative assistant as part of the holistic picture to understand the company environment as a whole?


**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. Define Power
2. What are the components that constitute power in organizations?

**2 Uses of Power**

1. How do you recognize and account for the exercise of counterpower and make appropriate use of strategic contingencies in interunit or interorganizational relations?

As we look around organizations, it is easy to see the manifestations of power almost anywhere. In fact, there are a wide variety of power-based methods used to influence others. Here, we will examine three aspects of the use of power: commonly used power tactics in organizations, symbols of managerial power, and the ethical use of power.

**Common Power Tactics in Organizations**

As noted above, many power tactics are available for use by managers. However, as we will see, some are more ethical than others. Here, we look at some of the more commonly used power tactics found in both business and public organizations.12

**Controlling Access to Information.** Most decisions rest on the availability of relevant information, so persons controlling access to information play a major role in decisions made. A good example of this is the common corporate practice of pay secrecy. Only the personnel department and senior managers typically have salary information—and power—for personnel decisions.
Controlling Access to Persons. Another related power tactic is the practice of controlling access to persons. A well-known factor contributing to President Nixon's downfall was his isolation from others. His two senior advisers had complete control over who saw the president. Similar criticisms were leveled against President Reagan.

Selective Use of Objective Criteria. Very few organizational questions have one correct answer; instead, decisions must be made concerning the most appropriate criteria for evaluating results. As such, significant power can be exercised by those who can practice selective use of objective criteria that will lead to a decision favorable to themselves. According to Herbert Simon, if an individual is permitted to select decision criteria, he needn't care who actually makes the decision. Attempts to control objective decision criteria can be seen in faculty debates in a university or college over who gets hired or promoted. One group tends to emphasize teaching and will attempt to set criteria for employment dealing with teacher competence, subject area, interpersonal relations, and so on. Another group may emphasize research and will try to set criteria related to number of publications, reputation in the field, and so on.

Controlling the Agenda. One of the simplest ways to influence a decision is to ensure that it never comes up for consideration in the first place. There are a variety of strategies used for controlling the agenda. Efforts may be made to order the topics at a meeting in such a way that the undesired topic is last on the list. Failing this, opponents may raise a number of objections or points of information concerning the topic that cannot be easily answered, thereby tabling the topic until another day.

Using Outside Experts. Still another means to gain an advantage is using outside experts. The unit wishing to exercise power may take the initiative and bring in experts from the field or experts known to be in sympathy with their cause. Hence, when a dispute arises over spending more money on research versus actual production, we would expect differing answers from outside research consultants and outside production consultants. Most consultants have experienced situations in which their clients fed them information and biases they hoped the consultant would repeat in a meeting.

Bureaucratic Gamesmanship. In some situations, the organizations own policies and procedures provide ammunition for power plays, or bureaucratic gamesmanship. For instance, a group may drag its feet on making changes in the workplace by creating red tape, work slowdowns, or “work to rule.” (Working to rule occurs when employees diligently follow every work rule and policy statement to the letter; this typically results in the organization's grinding to a halt as a result of the many and often conflicting rules and policy statements.) In this way, the group lets it be known that the workflow will continue to slow down until they get their way.

Coalitions and Alliances. The final power tactic to be discussed here is that of coalitions and alliances. One unit can effectively increase its power by forming an alliance with other groups that share similar interests. This technique is often used when multiple labor unions in the same corporation join forces to gain contract concessions for their workers. It can also be seen in the tendency of corporations within one industry to form trade associations to lobby for their position. Although the various members of a coalition need not agree on everything—indeed, they may be competitors—sufficient agreement on the problem under consideration is necessary as a basis for action.

Symbols of Managerial Power

How do we know when a manager has power in an organizational setting? Harvard professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter has identified several of the more common symbols of managerial power. For example, managers have power to the extent that they can intercede favorably on behalf of someone in trouble with the organization. Have you ever noticed that when several people commit the same mistake, some don't get punished? Perhaps someone is watching over them.

Moreover, managers have power when they can get a desirable placement for a talented subordinate or get approval for expenditures beyond their budget. Other manifestations of power include the ability to secure above-average salary increases for subordinates and the ability to get items on the agenda at policy meetings.

And we can see the extent of managerial power when someone can gain quick access to top decision makers or can get early information about decisions and policy shifts. In other words, who can get through to the boss, and who cannot? Who is “connected,” and who is not?

Finally, power is evident when top decision makers seek out the opinions of a particular manager on important questions.
The Ethical Use of Power

Several guidelines for the ethical use of power can be identified. These can be arranged according to our previous discussion of the five bases of power, as shown in Table 1. As will be noted, several techniques are available that accomplish their aims without compromising ethical standards. For example, a manager using reward power can verify subordinate compliance with work directives, ensure that all requests are both feasible and reasonable, make only ethical or proper requests, offer rewards that are valued by employees, and ensure that all rewards for good performance are credible and reasonably attainable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ethical Use of Power</th>
<th>Guidelines for Use</th>
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| **Referent power**      | • Treat subordinates fairly  
                      | • Defend subordinates' interests |
|                        | • Be sensitive to subordinates' needs, feelings  
                      | • Select subordinates similar to oneself |
|                        | • Engage in role modeling |
| **Expert power**        | • Promote image of expertise  
                      | • Maintain credibility |
|                        | • Act confident and decisive  
                      | • Keep informed |
|                        | • Recognize employee concerns  
                      | • Avoid threatening subordinates' self-esteem |
| **Legitimate power**    | • Be cordial and polite  
                      | • Be confident |
|                        | • Be clear and follow up to verify understanding  
                      | • Make sure request is appropriate |
|                        | • Explain reasons for request  
                      | • Follow proper channels |
|                        | • Exercise power regularly  
                      | • Enforce compliance |
|                        | • Be sensitive to subordinates' concerns |
| **Reward power**        | • Verify compliance  
                      | • Make feasible, reasonable requests |
|                        | • Make only ethical, proper requests  
                      | • Offer rewards desired by subordinates |
|                        | • Offer only credible rewards |
| **Coercive power**      | • Inform subordinates of rules and penalties  
                      | • Warn before punishing |
|                        | • Administer punishment consistently and uniformly  
                      | • Understand the situation before acting |
|                        | • Maintain credibility  
                      | • Fit punishment to the infraction |
|                        | • Punish in private |

Table 1 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license) Source: Adapted from Gary A. Yukl, Leadership in Organizations, 8th edition 2013 (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Pearson), pp. 44–58.

Even coercive power can be used without jeopardizing personal integrity. For example, a manager can make sure that all employees know the rules and penalties for rule infractions, provide warnings before punishing, administer
punishments fairly and uniformly, and so forth. The point here is that managers have at their disposal numerous tactics that they can employ without crossing over into questionable managerial behavior. In view of the increasing number of lawsuits filed by employees for harmful practices, it seems wise for a manager to consider his behaviors before acting; this will help ensure the highest ethical standards.

**ETHICS IN PRACTICE**

**Investing the Challenger Disaster**

The January 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, at a cost of seven lives, has been analyzed from several managerial standpoints: poor decision-making, poor management control, and poor leadership have all been blamed. We can also see in this tragedy an example of the unethical use of organizational power.

It has been determined that the explosion that doomed the space shuttle was caused by poorly designed seals on the booster rockets. The boosters were manufactured by Morton Thiokol, a major defense contractor. When the U.S. Congress initiated its investigation of the causes of the disaster, it found several disturbing facts. To begin with, several Morton Thiokol engineers had warned that the boosters were unsafe early in the design stage, but no one listened. Once the boosters were in production, engineers again warned of possible problems, but to no avail. The company kept the information quiet.

Equally disturbing was the fact that after two company engineers testified in the congressional hearing, they were abruptly transferred to undesirable assignments elsewhere in the company. When asked by Congress whether they thought their transfers were in retaliation for their whistleblowing, both engineers responded yes. One noted, “I feel I was set aside so I would not have contact with the people from NASA.” The company had, in effect, used its power to try to isolate those who talked freely with the congressional investigators. In its defense, Morton Thiokol responded that it had demoted no one as a result of the investigation. “We’ve changed a lot of duties . . . because we’re reorganizing,” a management representative said.


**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. How is power used in organizations?
2. How can managers use strategy to counteract the negative use of power in organizations?
3 Political Behavior in Organizations

1. How do managers cope effectively with organizational politics?

Closely related to the concept of power is the equally important topic of politics. In any discussion of the exercise of power—particularly in intergroup situations—a knowledge of basic political processes is essential. We will begin our discussion with this in mind. Next, on the basis of this analysis, we will consider political strategies for acquiring, maintaining, and using power in intergroup relations. Finally, we look at ways to limit the impact of political behavior in organizations.

What Is Politics?

Perhaps the earliest definition of politics was offered by Lasswell, who described it as who gets what, when, and how.\(^{15}\) Even from this simple definition, one can see that politics involves the resolution of differing preferences in conflicts over the allocation of scarce and valued resources. Politics represents one mechanism to solve allocation problems when other mechanisms, such as the introduction of new information or the use of a simple majority rule, fail to apply. For our purposes here, we will adopt Pfeffer's definition of politics as involving “those activities taken within organizations to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation in which there is uncertainty or dissensus about choices.”\(^{16}\)

In comparing the concept of politics with the related concept of power, Pfeffer notes:

If power is a force, a store of potential influence through which events can be affected, politics involves those activities or behaviors through which power is developed and used in organizational settings. Power is a property of the system at rest; politics is the study of power in action. An individual, subunit or department may have power within an organizational context at some period of time; politics involves the exercise of power to get something accomplished, as well as those activities which are undertaken to expand the power already possessed or the scope over which it can be exercised.\(^{17}\)

Political behavior is activity that is initiated for the purpose of overcoming opposition or resistance. In the absence of opposition, there is no need for political activity. It should be remembered that political activity need not necessarily be dysfunctional for organization-wide effectiveness. In fact, many managers often believe that their political actions on behalf of their own departments are actually in the best interests of the organization as a whole. Finally, we should note that politics, like power, is not inherently bad. In many instances, the survival of the organization depends on the success of a department or coalition of departments challenging a traditional but outdated policy or objective. That is why an understanding of organizational politics, as well as power, is so essential for managers.

Intensity of Political Behavior

Contemporary organizations are highly political entities. Indeed, much of the goal-related effort produced by an organization is directly attributable to political processes. However, the intensity of political behavior varies, depending upon many factors. For example, in one study, managers were asked to rank several organizational decisions on the basis of the extent to which politics were involved.\(^{18}\) Results showed that the most political decisions (in rank order) were those involving interdepartmental coordination, promotions and transfers, and the delegation of authority.

On the other hand, the managers in the study ranked as least political such decisions as personnel policies, hiring, and disciplinary procedures. These decisions are typically characterized by clearly established policies, procedures, and objective criteria.

On the basis of findings such as these, it is possible to develop a typology of when political behavior would generally be greatest and least. This model is shown in Figure 5. As can be seen, we would expect the greatest amount of political activity in situations characterized by high uncertainty and complexity and high competition among employees or
groups for scarce resources. The least politics would be expected under conditions of low uncertainty and complexity and little competition among employees over resources.

**Reasons for Political Behavior**

Following from the above model, we can identify at least five conditions conducive to political behavior in organizations. These are shown in Table 2, along with possible resulting behaviors. The conditions include the following:

1. **Ambiguous goals.** When the goals of a department or organization are ambiguous, more room is available for politics. As a result, members may pursue personal gain under the guise of pursuing organizational goals.

2. **Limited resources.** Politics surfaces when resources are scarce and allocation decisions must be made. If resources were ample, there would be no need to use politics to claim one’s “share.”

3. **Changing technology and environment.** In general, political behavior is increased when the nature of the internal technology is nonroutine and when the external environment is dynamic and complex. Under these conditions, ambiguity and uncertainty are increased, thereby triggering political behavior by groups interested in pursuing certain courses of action.

4. **Nonprogrammed decisions.** A distinction is made between programmed and nonprogrammed decisions. When decisions are not programmed, conditions surrounding the decision problem and the decision process are usually more ambiguous, which leaves room for political maneuvering. Programmed decisions, on the other hand, are typically specified in such detail that little room for maneuvering exists. Hence, we are likely to see more political behavior on major questions, such as long-range strategic planning decisions.

5. **Organizational change.** Periods of organizational change also present opportunities for political rather than rational behavior. Efforts to restructure a particular department, open a new division, introduce a new product line, and so forth, are invitations to all to join the political process as different factions and coalitions fight over territory.

A large proportion of contemporary organizations are highly political in nature. As a result, contemporary managers must be sensitive to political processes as they relate to the acquisition and maintenance of power in organizations. This brings up the question of why we have policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) in organizations. Actually, such policies are frequently aimed at reducing the extent to which politics influence a particular decision. This effort to encourage “rational” decisions in organizations was a primary reason behind Max Weber’s development of the bureaucratic model. That is, increases in the specification of policy statements often are inversely related to political efforts, as shown in Figure 6. This is true primarily because such actions reduce the uncertainties surrounding a decision and hence the opportunity for political efforts.
Conditions Conducive to Political Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevailing Conditions</th>
<th>Resulting Political Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous goals</td>
<td>Attempts to define goals to one's advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources</td>
<td>Fight to maximize one's share of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic technology and environment</td>
<td>Attempts to exploit uncertainty for personal gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprogrammed decisions</td>
<td>Attempts to make suboptimal decisions that favor personal ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational change</td>
<td>Attempts to use reorganization as a chance to pursue own interests and goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Figure 6 Relationship Between Company Standard Operating Procedures and Political Behavior (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Figure 7 Open Office Corner Office: Corner offices are considered desirable because they have windows on two exterior walls, as opposed to a typical office with only one window or none at all. They are usually assigned to the head of the organization or division. The open office concept has been around for some time and has evolved as technology has reduced the need to have access to stored paper records of a fixed phone or office computer. Having no walls, no doors, and shared workspaces is designed to achieve increased communication and flow of ideas amongst employees, but there is concern that an open concept decreases employees' job satisfaction and decreases privacy, which also affects productivity. (Attribution; Nic Bastian (Corner office) Loozerboy (Open Concept)/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Examples

MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

Technology, Innovation, and Politics in Performance Appraisals

Developing a strategy for a performance appraisal is an important step for any company, and keeping out political bias is a main concern as well. Unfortunately, many times there is no way around bringing some bias into a performance appraisal situation. Managers often think of the impact that their review will have on the employee, how it will affect their relationship, and what it means for their career in the future. There are a lot of games played in the rating process and whether managers admit it or not, they may be guilty of playing them. Many companies, such as Adobe, are looking at ways that they can revamp the process to eliminate potential biases and make evaluations fairer.

In 2012, Adobe transformed its business, changing its product cycle; while undergoing process changes, Adobe understood that there needed to be a cultural shift as well. It announced the “Check-in” review process to allow for faster feedback, as well as an end to their outdated annual review process. With the faster-paced reality of their product cycles and subscription-based model in technology, this made complete sense.

This process established a new way of thinking, allowing for two-way communication to become the norm between managers and employees. They were able to have frequent candid conversations, approaching the tough subjects in order make improvements rather than waiting until an annual review and letting bad performance go unchecked or good performance go unnoticed. Eliminating a once-a-year cycle of review also eliminates the issue of politics creeping into the process. Managers are able to think critically about the
performance, working alongside their employees to better the outcome rather than worrying about having a
tough conversation and the bad result that may follow—and having to live with the fallout. Employees also are
given chances to provide feedback and their own personal evaluation, which then is discussed with the
manager. They review the items together, and what is formally submitted is agreed upon, rather than set in
stone. The addition of the employee feedback is another great way to reduce the insertion of politics or bias in
the review.

In result of this change, Adobe’s employees showed higher engagement and satisfaction with their work,
consistently improving. They no longer had negative surprises in their annual review and were able to adjust
priorities and behaviors to become more effective workers.

Questions:

1. What are important considerations to eliminate potential political bias in a performance review?
2. Why was Adobe successful in the changes that they implemented in their performance review process?
3. What other positive outcomes could be achieved from an ongoing feedback model versus annual
performance review?

Sources: D. Morris, “Death of the Performance Review: How Adobe Reinvented Performance Management and

Political Strategies in Intergroup Relations

Up to this point, we have explained the related concepts of power and politics primarily as they relate to interpersonal
behavior. When we shift our focus from the individual or interpersonal to the intergroup level of analysis, the picture
becomes somewhat more complicated. In developing a portrait of how political strategies are used to attain and
maintain power in intergroup relations, we will highlight two major aspects of the topic. The first is the relationship
between power and the control of critical resources. The second is the relationship between power and the control of
critical resources where the second is the relationship between power and the control of strategic activities. Both will
illustrate how subunit control leads to the acquisition of power in organizational settings.

Power and the Control of Critical Resources

On the basis of what has been called the resource dependence model, we can analyze intergroup political behavior by
examining how critical resources are controlled and shared.21 That is, when one subunit of an organization (perhaps the
purchasing department) controls a scarce resource that is needed by another subunit (for example, the power to decide
what to buy and what not to buy), that subunit acquires power. This power may be over other subunits within the same
organization or over subunits in other organizations (for example, the marketing units of other companies that are trying
to sell to the first company). As such, this unit is in a better position to bargain for the critical resources it needs from
its own or other organizations. Hence, although all subunits may contribute something to the organization as a whole,
power allocation within the organization will be influenced by the relative importance of the resources contributed by
each unit.

Power and the Control of Strategic Activities

In addition to the control of critical resources, subunits can also attain power by gaining control over activities
that are needed by others to complete their tasks. These critical activities have been called strategic contingencies.
A contingency is defined by Miles as “a requirement of the activities of one subunit that is affected by the activities
of other subunits.” For example, the business office of most universities represents a strategic contingency for the various colleges within the university because it has veto or approval power over financial expenditures of the schools. Its approval of a request to spend money is far from certain. Thus, a contingency represents a source of uncertainty in the decision-making process. A contingency becomes strategic when it has the potential to alter the balance of interunit or interdepartmental power in such a way that interdependencies among the various units are changed.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to consider the example of power distribution in various organizations attempting to deal with a major source of uncertainty—the external environment. In a classic study by Lawrence and Lorsch, influence patterns were examined for companies in three divergent industries: container manufacturing, food processing, and plastics. It was found that in successful firms, power distribution conformed to the firm’s strategic contingencies. For example, in the container-manufacturing companies, where the critical contingencies were customer delivery and product quality, the major share of power in decision-making resided in the sales and production staffs. In contrast, in the food-processing firms, where the strategic contingencies focused on expertise in marketing and food sciences, major power rested in the sales and research units. Those who held power in the successful organizations were in areas that were of central concern to the firm and its survival at a particular time.

The changing nature of strategic contingencies can be seen in the evolution of power distribution in major public utilities. Many years ago, when electric companies were developing and growing, most of the senior officers of the companies were engineers. Technical development was the central issue. More recently, however, as utilities face greater litigation, government regulation, and controversy over nuclear power, lawyers are predominant in the leadership of most companies. This example serves to emphasize that “subunits could inherit and lose power, not necessarily by their own actions, but by the shifting contingencies in the environment confronting the organization.”

**Nonsubstitutability of Coping Activities.** Substitutability is the capacity for one subunit to seek needed resources from alternate sources. Two factors influence the extent to which substitutability is available to a subunit. First, the availability of alternatives must be considered. If a subunit can get the job done using different products or processes, it is less susceptible to influence. In the IBM-compatible personal computer market, for example, there are so many vendors that no one can control the market. On the other hand, if a company is committed to a Macintosh and iPad computing environment, only one vendor (Apple Computer) is available, which increases Apple’s control over the marketplace.

Second, the replaceability of personnel is important. A major reason for the power of staff specialists (personnel managers, purchasing agents, etc.) is that they possess expertise in a specialized area of value to the organization. Consider also a reason for closed-shop union contracts: they effectively reduce the replaceability of workers.

Thus, a second influence on the extent of subunit power is the extent to which subunit A provides goods or services to B for which there are no (or only a few) substitutes. In this way, B needs A in order to accomplish subunit objectives.

**Centrality of Coping Activities.** Finally, one must consider the extent to which a subunit is of central importance to the operations of the enterprise. This is called the subunit’s work centrality. The more interconnected subunit A is with other subunits in the organization, the more “central” it is. This centrality, in turn, is influenced by two factors. The first is workflow pervasiveness—the degree to which the actual work of one subunit is connected with the work of the subunits. If subunit B cannot complete its own tasks without the help of the work activities of subunit A, then A has power over B. An example of this is an assembly line, where units toward the end of the line are highly dependent upon units at the beginning of the line for inputs.

The second factor, workflow immediacy, relates to the speed and severity with which the work of one subunit affects the final outputs of the organization. For instance, companies that prefer to keep low inventories of raw materials (perhaps for tax purposes) are, in effect, giving their outside suppliers greater power than those companies that keep large reserves of raw materials.

When taken as a whole, then, the strategic contingency model of intergroup power suggests that subunit power is influenced when one subunit can help another unit reduce or cope with its uncertainty, the subunit is difficult to replace, or the subunit is central to continued operations. The more these three conditions prevail, the more power will become vested in the subunit. Even so, it should be recognized that the power of one subunit or group can shift over time. As noted by Hickson and his colleagues, “As the goals, outputs, technologies, and markets of organizations change,
so, for each subunit, the values of the independent variables [such as coping with uncertainty, nonsubstitutability, and centrality] change, and the patterns of power change. In other words, the strategic contingency model suggested here is a dynamic one that is subject to change over time as various subunits and groups negotiate, bargain, and compromise with one another in an effort to secure a more favorable position in the organizational power structure.

MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

The Politics of Innovation

A good example of the strategic contingencies approach to the study of power and politics can be seen in a consideration of organizational innovation. It has long been recognized that it is easier to invent something new from outside an organization than to innovate within an existing company. As a result, a disproportionate share of new products originates from small businesses and entrepreneurs, not the major corporations with all the resources to innovate. Why? Much of the answer can be found in politics.

When a person or group has a new idea for a product or service, it is often met with a barrage of resistance from different sectors of the company. These efforts are motivated by the famous “not-invented-here syndrome,” the tendency of competing groups to fight over turf, and the inclination to criticize and destroy any new proposal that threatens to change the status quo. Other groups within the company simply see little reason to be supportive of the idea.

This lack of support—indeed, hostility—occurs largely because within every company there is competition for resources. These resources can include money, power, and opportunities for promotion. As one consultant noted, “One person’s innovation is another person’s failure.” As a result, there is often considerable fear and little incentive for one strategic group within a company to cooperate with another. Because both groups usually need each other for success, nothing happens. To the extent that politics could be removed from such issues, far more energy would be available to capitalize on an innovative idea and get it to market before the competition.


CONCEPT CHECK

1. What is politics and political behavior in organizations?

4 Limiting the Influence of Political Behavior

1. How do you recognize and limit inappropriate or unethical political behavior where it occurs?

The final topic we will examine concerns ways in which people and groups can attempt to lessen the impact of political behavior. Clearly, politics in organizations cannot be eliminated. Yet to some extent, the negative aspects of it can be neutralized if managers carefully monitor the work environment and take remedial action where necessary. Part of this issue was discussed above, in the section on counterpower. Beyond this, however, several strategies can be identified that can help manage organizational politics. As shown in Table 3, four basic strategies can be used.

First, efforts can be made to reduce the uncertainty in the organization through clarifying job responsibilities, bases for evaluations and rewards, and so forth. The less ambiguity in the system, the less room there is for dysfunctional political behavior. Second, managers can try to reduce interpersonal or intergroup competition by using impartial standards for resource allocation and by emphasizing the superordinate goals of the entire organization—toward which all members of the organization should be working. Third, managers can attempt to break up existing political fiefdoms through personnel reassignment or transfer or by changing the reward system to encourage interunit cooperation.
Finally, managers can work to prevent the development of future fiefdoms through training programs, selection and promotion, and reward distribution.

To the extent that employees see the organization as a fair place to work and to the extent that clear goals and resource allocation procedures are present, office politics should subside, though not disappear. In organizations where politics prosper, in fact, you are likely to find a reward system that encourages and promotes such behavior. The choice is up to the organization.

Limiting the Effects of Political Behavior

Source: Adapted from “The Use and Abuse of Corporate Politics,” by Don R. Beeman and Thomas W. Sharkey. Reprinted from Business Horizons, March–April 1987 by the Foundation for the School of Business at Indiana University.

To Reduce System Uncertainty

- Make clear what are the bases and processes for evaluation.
- Differentiate rewards among high and low performers.
- Make sure the rewards are as immediately and directly related to performance as possible.

To Reduce Competition

- Try to minimize resource competition among managers.
- Replace resource competition with externally oriented goals and objectives.

To Break Existing Political Fiefdoms

- Where highly cohesive political empires exist, break them apart by removing or splitting the most dysfunctional subgroups.
- If you are an executive, be keenly sensitive to managers whose mode of operation is the personalization of political patronage. First, approach these persons with a directive to “stop the political maneuvering.” If it continues, remove them from the positions and preferably from the company.

To Prevent Future Fiefdoms

- Make one of the most important criteria for promotion an apolitical attitude that puts organizational ends ahead of personal power ends.

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CONCEPT CHECK

1. How can managers limit inappropriate and unethical behavior in the organization?

Key Terms

**Authority**
Represents the right to seek compliance by others.

**Bases of power**
The five bases of power are referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive power.

**Coercive power**
Involves forcing someone to comply with one's wishes.

**Counterpower**
Focuses on the extent to which person B has other sources of power to buffer the effects of person A's power.

**Expert power**
Occurs when person A gains power because A has knowledge or expertise relevant to person B.

**Leadership**

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The ability of one individual to elicit responses from another person that go beyond required or mechanical compliance.

**Legitimate power**
Exists when person B submits to person A because B feels that A has a right to exert power in a certain domain.

**Power**
The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance.

**Power dependencies**
A state where all people are not subject to (or dependent upon) the same bases of power.

**Referent power**
A state where allegiance is based on interpersonal attraction of one individual for another.

**Reward power**
Exists when person A has power over person B because A controls rewards that B wants. These rewards can cover a wide array of possibilities, including pay raises, promotions, desirable job assignments, more responsibility, new equipment, and so forth.

**Bureaucratic gamesmanship**
A situation where the organizations own policies and procedures provide ammunition for power plays.

**Coalition**
A situation where one unit can effectively increase its power by forming an alliance with other groups that share similar interests.

**Work to rule**
Occurs when employees diligently follow every work rule and policy statement to the letter; this typically results in the organization's grinding to a halt as a result of the many and often conflicting rules and policy statements.

**Politics**
Involves those activities taken within an organization to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to attain preferred outcomes in a situation in which there is uncertainty and disagreement over choices.

**Resource dependence**
When one subunit of an organization controls a scarce resource that is needed by another subunit, that subunit acquires power.

**Strategic contingencies**
A requirement of the activities of one subunit that is affected by the activities of other subunits.

**Work centrality**
The more interconnected subunit A is with other subunits in the organization, the more central it is.

**Workflow immediacy**
Relates to the speed and severity with which the work of one subunit affects the final outputs of the organization.

**Workflow pervasiveness**
The degree to which the actual work of one subunit is connected with the work of the subunits.

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**Chapter Review Questions**

1. Compare and contrast power, authority, and leadership.
2. Identify five bases of power, and provide an example of each. Which base (or bases) of power do you feel would be most commonly found in organizations?
3. Discuss the concept of power dependencies. What is the relationship between power dependencies
4. What is counterpower? Provide an example of counterpower from your own experience.
5. Why is it important to understand political behavior in organizations?
6. Define politics. How does politics differ from power?
7. Compare and contrast the resource dependence model of power and politics with the strategic contingency model.
8. Identify several specific power tactics in organizations, and provide an example of each.
9. Why is it important that the exercise of power and politics be handled in an ethical fashion? What might happen if employees felt that managers were using power in an unethical fashion?
Humans are not perfect decision makers. Not only are we not perfect, but we depart from perfection or rationality in systematic and predictable ways. The understanding of these systematic and predictable departures is core to the field of judgment and decision making. By understanding these limitations, we can also identify strategies for making better and more effective decisions.

PDF Download

Key Terms

- Anchoring
- Biases
- Bounded awareness
- Bounded ethicality
- Bounded rationality
- Bounded self-interest
- Bounded willpower
- Framing
- Overconfidence
- System 1
- System 2

Learning Objectives

- Understand the systematic biases that affect our judgment and decision making.
- Develop strategies for making better decisions.
- Experience some of the biases through sample decisions.

Introduction

Every day you have the opportunity to make countless decisions: should you eat dessert, cheat on a test, or attend a sports event with your friends. If you reflect on your own history of choices you will realize that they vary in quality; some are rational and some are not.

In his Nobel Prize–winning work, psychologist Herbert Simon (1957; March & Simon, 1958) argued that our decisions
are bounded in their rationality. According to the bounded rationality framework, human beings try to make rational decisions (such as weighing the costs and benefits of a choice) but our cognitive limitations prevent us from being fully rational. Time and cost constraints limit the quantity and quality of the information that is available to us. Moreover, we only retain a relatively small amount of information in our usable memory. And limitations on intelligence and perceptions constrain the ability of even very bright decision makers to accurately make the best choice based on the information that is available.

About 15 years after the publication of Simon's seminal work, Tversky and Kahneman (1973, 1974; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) produced their own Nobel Prize–winning research, which provided critical information about specific systematic and predictable biases, or mistakes, that influence judgment (Kahneman received the prize after Tversky's death). The work of Simon, Tversky, and Kahneman paved the way to our modern understanding of judgment and decision making. And their two Nobel prizes signaled the broad acceptance of the field of behavioral decision research as a mature area of intellectual study.

What Would a Rational Decision Look Like?

Imagine that during your senior year in college, you apply to a number of doctoral programs, law schools, or business schools (or another set of programs in whatever field most interests you). The good news is that you receive many acceptance letters. So, how should you decide where to go? Bazerman and Moore (2013) outline the following six steps that you should take to make a rational decision:
(1) define the problem (i.e., selecting the right graduate program)
(2) identify the criteria necessary to judge the multiple options (location, prestige, faculty, etc.)
(3) weight the criteria (rank them in terms of importance to you)
(4) generate alternatives (the schools that admitted you)
(5) rate each alternative on each criterion (rate each school on each criteria that you identified)
(6) compute the optimal decision. Acting rationally would require that you follow these six steps in a fully rational manner.

I strongly advise people to think through important decisions such as this in a manner similar to this process. Unfortunately, we often don’t. Many of us rely on our intuitions far more than we should. And when we do try to think systematically, the way we enter data into such formal decision-making processes is often biased.

Fortunately, psychologists have learned a great deal about the biases that affect our thinking. This knowledge about the systematic and predictable mistakes that even the best and the brightest make can help you identify flaws in your thought processes and reach better decisions.

Biases in Our Decision Process

Simon’s concept of bounded rationality taught us that judgment deviates from rationality, but it did not tell us how judgment is biased. Tversky and Kahneman’s (1974) research helped to diagnose the specific systematic, directional biases that affect human judgment. These biases are created by the tendency to short-circuit a rational decision process by relying on a number of simplifying strategies, or rules of thumb, known as heuristics. Heuristics allow us to cope with the complex environment surrounding our decisions. Unfortunately, they also lead to systematic and predictable biases.

To highlight some of these biases please answer the following three quiz items:

**Exercises**

**Problem 1 (adapted from Alpert & Raiffa, 1969):**

Listed below are 10 uncertain quantities. Do not look up any information on these items. For each, write down your best estimate of the quantity. Next, put a lower and upper bound around your estimate, such that
you are 98 percent confident that your range surrounds the actual quantity. Respond to each of these items even if you admit to knowing very little about these quantities.

1. The first year the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded
2. The date the French celebrate “Bastille Day”
3. The distance from the Earth to the Moon
4. The height of the Leaning Tower of Pisa
5. Number of students attending Oxford University (as of 2014)
6. Number of people who have traveled to space (as of 2013)
7. 2012-2013 annual budget for the University of Pennsylvania
8. Average life expectancy in Bangladesh (as of 2012)
9. World record for pull-ups in a 24-hour period
10. Number of colleges and universities in the Boston metropolitan area

Exercises

Problem 2 (adapted from Joyce & Biddle, 1981):

We know that executive fraud occurs and that it has been associated with many recent financial scandals. And, we know that many cases of management fraud go undetected even when annual audits are performed. Do you think that the incidence of significant executive-level management fraud is more than 10 in 1,000 firms (that is, 1 percent) audited by Big Four accounting firms?

1. Yes, more than 10 in 1,000 Big Four clients have significant executive-level management fraud.
2. No, fewer than 10 in 1,000 Big Four clients have significant executive-level management fraud.

What is your estimate of the number of Big Four clients per 1,000 that have significant executive-level management fraud? (Fill in the blank below with the appropriate number.)

_________ in 1,000 Big Four clients have significant executive-level management fraud.
Problem 3 (adapted from Tversky & Kahneman, 1981):

Imagine that the United States is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual avian disease that is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows.

1. Program A: If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.
2. Program B: If Program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

Overconfidence

On the first problem, if you set your ranges so that you were justifiably 98 percent confident, you should expect that approximately 9.8, or nine to 10, of your ranges would include the actual value. So, let’s look at the correct answers:
Overconfidence is a natural part of most people's decision-making process and this can get us into trouble. Is it possible to overcome our faulty thinking? Perhaps. See the “Fixing Our Decisions” section below. [Image: Barn Images, https://goo.gl/IYzbDV, CC BY 2.0, https://goo.gl/BRvSA7]

1. 1901
2. 14th of July
3. 384,403 km (238,857 mi)
4. 56.67 m (183 ft)
5. 22,384 (as of 2014)
6. 536 people (as of 2013)
7. $6.007 billion
Count the number of your 98% ranges that actually surrounded the true quantities. If you surrounded nine to 10, you were appropriately confident in your judgments. But most readers surround only between three (30%) and seven (70%) of the correct answers, despite claiming 98% confidence that each range would surround the true value. As this problem shows, humans tend to be overconfident in their judgments.

**Anchoring**

Regarding the second problem, people vary a great deal in their final assessment of the level of executive-level management fraud, but most think that 10 out of 1,000 is too low. When I run this exercise in class, half of the students respond to the question that I asked you to answer. The other half receive a similar problem, but instead are asked whether the correct answer is higher or lower than 200 rather than 10. Most people think that 200 is high. But, again, most people claim that this “anchor” does not affect their final estimate. Yet, on average, people who are presented with the question that focuses on the number 10 (out of 1,000) give answers that are about one-half the size of the estimates of those facing questions that use an anchor of 200. When we are making decisions, any initial anchor that we face is likely to influence our judgments, even if the anchor is arbitrary. That is, we insufficiently adjust our judgments away from the anchor.

**Framing**

Turning to Problem 3, most people choose Program A, which saves 200 lives for sure, over Program B. But, again, if I was in front of a classroom, only half of my students would receive this problem. The other half would have received the same set-up, but with the following two options:

1. Program C: If Program C is adopted, 400 people will die.
2. Program D: If Program D is adopted, there is a one-third probability that no one will die and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

Careful review of the two versions of this problem clarifies that they are objectively the same. Saving 200 people (Program A) means losing 400 people (Program C), and Programs B and D are also objectively identical. Yet, in one of the most famous problems in judgment and decision making, most individuals choose Program A in the first set and Program D in the second set (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). People respond very differently to saving versus losing lives—even when the difference is based just on the “framing” of the choices.

The problem that I asked you to respond to was framed in terms of saving lives, and the implied reference point was the worst outcome of 600 deaths. Most of us, when we make decisions that concern gains, are risk averse; as a consequence, we lock in the possibility of saving 200 lives for sure. In the alternative version, the problem is framed in terms of losses. Now the implicit reference point is the best outcome of no deaths due to the avian disease. And in this case, most people are risk seeking when making decisions regarding losses.

These are just three of the many biases that affect even the smartest among us. Other research shows that we are biased in favor of information that is easy for our minds to retrieve, are insensitive to the importance of base rates.
and sample sizes when we are making inferences, assume that random events will always look random, search for information that confirms our expectations even when disconfirming information would be more informative, claim a priori knowledge that didn’t exist due to the hindsight bias, and are subject to a host of other effects that continue to be developed in the literature (Bazerman & Moore, 2013).

Contemporary Developments

Bounded rationality served as the integrating concept of the field of behavioral decision research for 40 years. Then, in 2000, Thaler (2000) suggested that decision making is bounded in two ways not precisely captured by the concept of bounded rationality. First, he argued that our willpower is bounded and that, as a consequence, we give greater weight to present concerns than to future concerns. Our immediate motivations are often inconsistent with our long-term interests in a variety of ways, such as the common failure to save adequately for retirement or the difficulty many people have staying on a diet. Second, Thaler suggested that our self-interest is bounded such that we care about the outcomes of others. Sometimes we positively value the outcomes of others—giving them more of a commodity than is necessary out of a desire to be fair, for example. And, in unfortunate contexts, we sometimes are willing to forgo our own benefits out of a desire to harm others.

My colleagues and I have recently added two other important bounds to the list. Chugh, Banaji, and Bazerman (2005) and Banaji and Bhaskar (2000) introduced the concept of bounded ethicality, which refers to the notion that our ethics are limited in ways we are not even aware of ourselves. Second, Chugh and Bazerman (2007) developed the concept of bounded awareness to refer to the broad array of focusing failures that affect our judgment, specifically the many ways in which we fail to notice obvious and important information that is available to us.

A final development is the application of judgment and decision-making research to the areas of behavioral economics, behavioral finance, and behavioral marketing, among others. In each case, these fields have been transformed by applying and extending research from the judgment and decision-making literature.

Fixing Our Decisions

Ample evidence documents that even smart people are routinely impaired by biases. Early research demonstrated, unfortunately, that awareness of these problems does little to reduce bias (Fischhoff, 1982). The good news is that more recent research documents interventions that do help us overcome our faulty thinking (Bazerman & Moore, 2013).

One critical path to fixing our biases is provided in Stanovich and West’s (2000) distinction between System
Nudges can be used to help people make better decisions about saving for retirement. System 1 processing is our intuitive system, which is typically fast, automatic, effortless, implicit, and emotional. System 2 refers to decision making that is slower, conscious, effortful, explicit, and logical. The six logical steps of decision making outlined earlier describe a System 2 process.

Clearly, a complete System 2 process is not required for every decision we make. In most situations, our System 1 thinking is quite sufficient; it would be impractical, for example, to logically reason through every choice we make while shopping for groceries. But, preferably, System 2 logic should influence our most important decisions. Nonetheless, we use our System 1 processes for most decisions in life, relying on it even when making important decisions.

The key to reducing the effects of bias and improving our decisions is to transition from trusting our intuitive System 1 thinking toward engaging more in deliberative System 2 thought. Unfortunately, the busier and more rushed people are, the more they have on their minds, and the more likely they are to rely on System 1 thinking (Chugh, 2004). The frantic pace of professional life suggests that executives often rely on System 1 thinking (Chugh, 2004).

Fortunately, it is possible to identify conditions where we rely on intuition at our peril and substitute more deliberative thought. One fascinating example of this substitution comes from journalist Michael Lewis’ (2003) account of how Billy Beane, the general manager of the Oakland Athletics, improved the outcomes of the failing baseball team after recognizing that the intuition of baseball executives was limited and systematically biased and that their intuitions had been incorporated into important decisions in ways that created enormous mistakes. Lewis (2003) documents that baseball professionals tend to overgeneralize from their personal experiences, be overly influenced by players' very recent performances, and overweight what they see with their own eyes, despite the fact that players' multiyear records provide far better data. By substituting valid predictors of future performance (System 2 thinking), the Athletics were able to outperform expectations given their very limited payroll.

Another important direction for improving decisions comes from Thaler and Sunstein’s (2008) book *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. Rather than setting out to debias human judgment, Thaler and Sunstein outline a strategy for how “decision architects” can change environments in ways that account for human bias and trigger better decisions as a result. For example, Beshears, Choi, Laibson, and Madrian (2008) have shown that simple changes to defaults can dramatically improve people's decisions. They tackle the failure of many people to save for retirement and show that a simple change can significantly influence enrollment in 401(k) programs. In most companies, when you start your job, you need to proactively sign up to join the company's retirement savings plan. Many people take years before getting around to doing so. When, instead, companies automatically enroll their employees in 401(k) programs and give them the opportunity to “opt out,” the net enrollment rate rises significantly. By changing defaults, we can counteract the human tendency to live with the status quo.

Similarly, Johnson and Goldstein’s (2003) cross-European organ donation study reveals that countries that have opt-in organ donation policies, where the default is not to harvest people's organs without their prior consent, sacrifice thousands of lives in comparison to opt-out policies, where the default is to harvest organs. The United States and too many other countries require that citizens opt in to organ donation through a proactive effort; as a consequence, consent rates range between 4.25%–44% across these countries. In contrast, changing the decision architecture to an...
opt-out policy improves consent rates to 85.9% to 99.98%. Designing the donation system with knowledge of the power of defaults can dramatically change donation rates without changing the options available to citizens. In contrast, a more intuitive strategy, such as the one in place in the United States, inspires defaults that result in many unnecessary deaths.

Take a Quiz

An (optional) quiz is available for this chapter at the Noba Project’s website.

Discussion Questions

1. Are the biases in this module a problem in the real world?
2. How would you use this module to be a better decision maker?
3. Can you see any biases in today’s newspaper?

Vocabulary

Anchoring
The bias to be affected by an initial anchor, even if the anchor is arbitrary, and to insufficiently adjust our judgments away from that anchor.

Biases
The systematic and predictable mistakes that influence the judgment of even very talented human beings.

Bounded awareness
The systematic ways in which we fail to notice obvious and important information that is available to us.

Bounded ethicality
The systematic ways in which our ethics are limited in ways we are not even aware of ourselves.

Bounded rationality
Model of human behavior that suggests that humans try to make rational decisions but are bounded due to cognitive limitations.

Bounded self-interest
The systematic and predictable ways in which we care about the outcomes of others.

Bounded willpower
The tendency to place greater weight on present concerns rather than future concerns.

Framing
The bias to be systematically affected by the way in which information is presented, while holding the objective information constant.

Heuristics
cognitive (or thinking) strategies that simplify decision making by using mental short-cuts
Overconfident
The bias to have greater confidence in your judgment than is warranted based on a rational assessment.

System 1
Our intuitive decision-making system, which is typically fast, automatic, effortless, implicit, and emotional.

System 2
Our more deliberative decision-making system, which is slower, conscious, effortful, explicit, and logical.

Outside Resources


References


Authors

Max H. Bazerman

Max H. Bazerman is the Jesse Isidor Straus Professor at the Harvard Business School and the co-director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Max’s awards include a 2006 honorary doctorate from the University of London (London Business School), the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Aspen Institute, and being named as one of Ethisphere’s 100 Most Influential in Business Ethics. Details at www.people.hbs.edu/mbazerman.
16. Structuration and Symbolic Convergence Theories

Structuration

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The theory of structuration is a social theory of the creation and reproduction of social systems that is based in the analysis of both structure and agents (see structure and agency), without giving primacy to either. Structuration proposes that structures (i.e., norms, rules, roles) interaction with agency (i.e., free will) to reproduce in groups, teams, and organizations.

**Duality of structure**

Structure refers generally to “rules and resources” and more specifically to “the structuring properties allowing the ‘binding’ of time-space in social systems”. These properties make it possible for similar social practices to exist across time and space and that lend them “systemic” form. Agents—groups or individuals—draw upon these structures to perform social actions through embedded memory, called mental models. Mental models are the vehicle through which guide everyday social action.

However, structure and agency are mutually influential. Structure is the result of these social practices. Thus, Giddens conceives of the duality of structure as being:

...the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both medium and outcome of reproduction of practices. Structure enters simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and ‘exists’ in the generating moments of this constitution.

Giddens uses “the duality of structure” (i.e. material/ideational, micro/macro) to emphasize structure’s nature as both medium and outcome. Structures exist both internally within agents as mental models that are the product of phenomenological and hermeneutic inheritance and externally as the manifestation of social actions. Similarly, social structures contain agents and/or are the product of past actions of agents. Giddens holds this duality, alongside “structure” and “system,” in addition to the concept of recursiveness, as the core of structuration theory.

**Cycle of structuration**

The duality of structure is essentially a feedback–feedforward process whereby agents and structures mutually enact social systems, and social systems in turn become part of that duality. Structuration thus recognizes a social cycle. In examining social systems, structuration theory examines structure, modality, and interaction. The “modality” (discussed below) of a structural system is the means by which structures are translated into actions.

**Interaction**

Interaction is the agent’s activity within the social system, space and time. “It can be understood as the fitful yet
rutinized occurrence of encounters, fading away in time and space, yet constantly reconstituted within different areas of time-space. “Rules can affect interaction, as originally suggested by Goffman. “Frames” are “clusters of rules which help to constitute and regulate activities, defining them as activities of a certain sort and as subject to a given range of sanctions.” Frames are necessary for agents to feel “ontological security, the trust that everyday actions have some degree of predictability. Whenever individuals interact in a specific context they address—without any difficulty and in many cases without conscious acknowledgement—the question: “What is going on here?” Framing is the practice by which agents make sense of what they are doing.

**Routinization**

Structuration theory is centrally concerned with order as “the transcending of time and space in human social relationships” Institutionalized action and routinization are foundational in the establishment of social order and the reproduction of social systems. Routine persists in society, even during social and political revolutions, where daily life is greatly deformed, “as Bettelheim demonstrates so well, routines, including those of an obnoxious sort, are re-established.” Routine interactions become institutionalized features of social systems via tradition, custom and/or habit, but this is no easy societal task and it “is a major error to suppose that these phenomena need no explanation. On the contrary, as Goffman (together with ethnomethodology) has helped to demonstrate, the routinized character of most social activity is something that has to be ‘worked at’ continually by those who sustain it in their day-to-day conduct.” Therefore, routinized social practices do not stem from coincidence, “but the skilled accomplishments of knowledgeable agents.”

**Explanation**

When I utter a sentence I draw upon various syntactical rules (sedimented in my practical consciousness of the language) in order to do so. These structural features of the language are the medium whereby I generate the utterance. But in producing a syntactically correct utterance I simultaneously contribute to the reproduction of the language as a whole. ...The relation between moment and totality for social theory... involves a dialectic of presence and absence which ties the most minor or trivial forms of social action to structural properties of the overall society, and to the coalescence of institutions over long stretches of historical time.

Thus, even the smallest social actions contribute to the alteration or reproduction of social systems. Social stability and order is not permanent; agents always possess a dialectic of control (discussed below) which allows them to break away from normative actions. Depending on the social factors present, agents may cause shifts in social structure.

The cycle of structuration is not a defined sequence; it is rarely a direct succession of causal events. Structures and agents are both internal and external to each other, mingling, interrupting, and continually changing each other as feedbacks and feedforwards occur. Giddens stated, “The degree of “systemness” is very variable. ...I take it to be one of the main features of structuration theory that the extension and ‘closure’ of societies across space and time is regarded as problematic.”

The use of “patriot” in political speech reflects this mingling, borrowing from and contributing to nationalistic norms and supports structures such as a police state, from which it in turn gains impact.

**Structure and society**

Structures are the “rules and resources” embedded in agents’ mental models. Agents call upon their mental models on
which they are “knowledgeable” to perform social actions. “Knowledgeability” refers to “what agents know about what they do, and why they do it.” Giddens divides these reproducing mental models (structures-within-knowledgeability) into three types:

- **Domination (power):** Giddens also uses “resources” to refer to this type. “Authoritative resources” allow agents to control persons, whereas “allocative resources” allow agents to control material objects.
- **Signification (meaning):** Giddens suggests that meaning is inferred through structures. Agents use existing experience to infer meaning. For example, Zanin and Piercy (2019) show that mental illness meaning comes from contextualized experience.
- **Legitimation (norms):** Giddens sometimes uses “rules” to refer to either signification or legitimation. An agent draws upon these stocks of knowledge via memory to inform him or herself about the external context, conditions, and potential results of an action.

When an agent uses structures for social interactions, they are called modalities. Modalities emerge the forms of facility (domination), interpretive scheme/communication (signification) and norms/sanctions (legitimation).

Thus, he distinguishes between overall “structures-within-knowledgeability” and the more limited and task-specific “modalities” on which these agents subsequently draw when they interact.

The duality of structures means that structures enter “simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and 'exists' in the generating moments of this constitution.” “Structures exist paradigmatically, as an absent set of differences, temporally “present” only in their instantiation, in the constituting moments of social systems.” Giddens draws upon structuralism and post-structuralism in theorizing that structures and their meaning are understood by their differences.

### Agents and society

**According to Giddens, agency** is human action. **Agency** is critical to both the reproduction and the transformation of society. Another way to explain this concept is by what Giddens calls the “reflexive monitoring of actions.” **Reflexive monitoring** refers to agents’ ability to monitor their actions and those actions’ settings and contexts. Monitoring is an essential characteristic of agency. Agents subsequently “rationalize,” or evaluate, the success of those efforts. All humans engage in this process, and expect the same from others. Through action, agents produce structures; through reflexive monitoring and rationalization, they transform them. To act, agents must be motivated, knowledgeable, and able to rationalize the action; further, agents must reflexively monitor the action.

Agents, while bounded in structure, draw upon their knowledge of that structural context when they act. However, actions are constrained by agents’ inherent capabilities and their understandings of available actions and external limitations. **Practical consciousness** and **discursive consciousness** inform these abilities. Practical consciousness is the knowledgeability that an agent brings to the tasks required by everyday life, which is so integrated as to be hardly noticed. Reflexive monitoring occurs at the level of practical consciousness. **Discursive consciousness** is the ability to verbally express knowledge. Alongside practical and discursive consciousness, Giddens recognizes actors as having reflexive, contextual knowledge, and that habitual, widespread use of knowledgeability makes structures become institutionalized.

Agents rationalize, and in doing so, link the agent and the agent’s knowledgeability. As agents, people coordinate ongoing projects, goals, and contexts while performing actions. This coordination is called reflexive monitoring, and is connected to ethnomethodology’s emphasis on agents’ intrinsic sense of accountability. According to Giddens (1984), **reflexivity** is comprised discursive consciousness (i.e., that which is said) and practical consciousness (i.e., the activity, or what is done). Kaspersen (2000) explained Giddens conceptualization of monitoring as what occurs as a result of routinized activity.
The factors that can enable or constrain an agent, as well as how an agent uses structures, are known as capability constraints. These include age, cognitive/physical limits on performing multiple tasks at once and the physical impossibility of being in multiple places at once, available time and the relationship between movement in space and movement in time.

Location offers are a particular type of capability constraint. Examples include:

- Locale
- Regionalization: political or geographical zones, or rooms in a building
- Presence: Do other actors participate in the action? (see co-presence); and more specifically
- Physical presence: Are other actors physically nearby?

Agents are always able to engage in a dialectic of control, able to “intervene in the world or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs.” In essence, agents experience inherent and contrasting amounts of autonomy and dependence; agents can always either act or not.

Change

The existence of multiple structures implies that the knowledgeable agents whose actions produce systems are capable of applying different schemas to contexts with differing resources, contrary to the conception of a universal habitus (learned dispositions, skills and ways of acting). He wrote that “Societies are based on practices that derived from many distinct structures, which exist at different levels, operate in different modalities, and are themselves based on widely varying types and quantities of resources. ...It is never true that all of them are homologous.”

Originally from Bourdieu, transposable schemas can be “applied to a wide and not fully predictable range of cases outside the context in which they were initially learned.” That capacity “is inherent in the knowledge of cultural schemas that characterizes all minimally competent members of society.”

Agents may modify schemas even though their use does not predictably accumulate resources. For example, the effect of a joke is never quite certain, but a comedian may alter it based on the amount of laughter it garners regardless of this variability.

Agents may interpret a particular resource according to different schemas. E.g., a commander could attribute his wealth to military prowess, while others could see it as a blessing from the gods or a coincidental initial advantage.

Structures often overlap, confusing interpretation (e.g., the structure of capitalist society includes production from both private property and worker solidarity).

Technology

This theory was adapted and augmented by researchers interested in the relationship between technology and social structures, such as information technology in organizations. DeSanctis and Poole proposed an “adaptive structuration theory” with respect to the emergence and use of group decision support systems. In particular, they chose Giddens’ notion of modalities to consider how technology is used with respect to its “spirit”. Appropriations are the immediate, visible actions that reveal deeper structuration processes and are enacted with “moves”. Appropriations may be faithful or unfaithful, be instrumental and be used with various attitudes.
Group communication

Poole, Seibold, and McPhee wrote that “group structuration theory,”\[26\] provides “a theory of group interaction commensurate with the complexities of the phenomenon.”\[27\]

The theory attempts to integrate macrosocial theories and individuals or small groups, as well as how to avoid the binary categorization of either “stable” or “emergent” groups.

Waldeck et al. concluded that the theory needs to better predict outcomes, rather than merely explaining them. Decision rules support decision-making, which produces a communication pattern that can be directly observable. Research has not yet examined the “rational” function of group communication and decision-making (i.e., how well it achieves goals), nor structural production or constraints. Researchers must empirically demonstrate the recursivity of action and structure, examine how structures stabilize and change over time due to group communication, and may want to integrate argumentation research.\[26\]

Symbolic Convergence Theory

From [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolic_convergence_theory)

People are storytellers. **Symbolic Convergence Theory** (SCT) is a communication theory developed by Ernest Bormann where people share common fantasies and these collections of individuals are transformed into a cohesive group. SCT offers an explanation for the appearance of a group’s cohesiveness, consisting of shared emotions, motives, and meanings. Through SCT, individuals can build a community or a group consciousness which grows stronger if they share a cluster of fantasy themes.\[1\] Symbolic convergence theory provides a description of the dynamic tendencies within systems of social interaction that cause communicative practices and forms to evolve. This theory allows theorists and practitioners to anticipate or predict what will happen and explain what did happen. SCT attempts to explain how communication can create and sustain group consciousness through the sharing of narratives or fantasies.\[3\]

To foster this cohesiveness, dramatizing or using fantasy stories are significant types of communication involved in SCT. SCT explains that meanings, emotions, values, and the motives for action are in the communication contexts by people trying to make sense out of a common experience.\[4\] It explores the human tendency of trying to understand events in terms of the people involved, who have certain personality traits and motivations, and have agency over how the events unfold.\[5\] SCT was first proposed by Ernest Bormann in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1972.\[6\]

Bormann defines the basic communicative dynamic of symbolic convergence theory as, “the sharing of group fantasies which bring about symbolic convergence for the participants” (p. 4). It is a process through which collectives create and share a consciousness and develop a common symbolic reality.\[8\]

Understanding SCT

**Fantasy themes**

Bormann uses fantasy to refer to “the creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need.”\[10\]
Fantasy themes are used to construct a rhetorical vision or to dramatize messages embraced by the whole group. Fantasy themes are the means through which interpretation is accomplished through communication. SCT theorists focus on reactions from the group when these fantasies are shared. Fantasy themes exist in the form of a word, a phrase, or a statement, which attempt to define past events, predict future events, or illustrate present events that are chronologically or spatially removed from the actual activities of the group. Most of the time, these fantasies trigger a chain reaction (called a fantasy chain) within the group where they will contribute more and more to the conversation or fantasy.

Bormann sees these fantasy themes fulfilling a psychological or rhetorical need through creative and organized interpretations of events. Fantasy theme analysis is a humanistic method of rhetorical criticism.

**Fantasy types**

A fantasy type is a fantasy theme that has currency across a large number of rhetorical visions. By providing known references, they help make sense out of a new phenomenon.

An example of a fantasy type would be when Richard Nixon was campaigning through his home state of California in 1952. A fund was put together by some wealthy Southern California businessman on behalf of Nixon. The newspapers picked this up and ran headlines such as “Secret Rich Men’s Trust Fund Keeps Nixon in Style Far Beyond His Salary”. The purpose of this fund was to help Nixon pay for expenses that he could not otherwise pay for out of his income. National newspapers were two to one in the favor of dropping Nixon from the ticket after this and his only hope was to find a way to regain public trust and support. Six days after the crisis, Nixon addressed the public by radio to respond to the charges against him. A fantasy theme emerging from this story would be Nixon presenting himself as the American dream. During his speech over the radio, he emphasized how he made his own way in the world and had to work for living. He also said, “How does a candidate pay for political expenses not covered by the government? First, is to be a rich man, which I am not. I feel that it is essential in this country of ours that a man of modest means can run for President.” He offers autobiographical references which allow him to appear as the average man. This is an appropriate fantasy theme because it developed a response to the allegations that he is not a rich man who is getting money from everyone, but a hard working man who started from the ground and worked upwards.

**Saga**

A saga is the telling and re-telling of the accomplishments and events in the life of an individual, group, organization, or larger entity such as a nation. For instance, examples of American sagas include “the spirit of entrepreneurship” and “the power of the ballot box.” Symbolic convergence theorists argue that the Soviet Union had difficulty maintaining cohesion of the fifteen republics due to the weakening of the communist rhetorical vision and dwindling sagas.

**Applied Group Concepts**

**Shared group consciousness**

A shared group consciousness must exist within a rhetorical community in order for a fantasy theme to chain out, a rhetorical vision to develop, a saga to exist, or a symbolic cue to imbue meaning. Some terms that portray a shared group consciousness are a common ground, mutual understanding, created social reality, meeting of minds and
empathic communication. Once a group has reached shared group consciousness, they no longer think in terms of “I” or “me” but in terms of “us” and “we.” After all, communication is the drive that allows groups of people to move towards their goal. A shared group consciousness also reduces uncertainty by allowing groups to develop an identity that shapes their culture. By shaping their own culture, this can influence norms, roles and even decision making.163

Rhetorical vision reality link

A rhetorical vision reality link allows for a viable rhetorical vision that chronicles an authentic account of the phenomena along with tangible evidence.141 The lack of a rhetorical vision reality link, with no clear observational impressions of the facts, may lead to disprovable fantasies, characterized by rumor, innuendo, gossip, and even paranoia.144

Fantasy theme artistry

Fantasy theme artistry is the rhetorical ability to present situations in a form that appears attractive to people so that they will share them.14 By presenting situations in a form that appears attractive to an audience, or showing that you have an understanding of the stories that group shares, you can speak to their stories and turn their opinions into your favor.172

Why Symbolic Convergence Theory is useful

These stories, or fantasies, can help businesses, corporations or politicians guide the positive and negative feedback directly back to those in power. Because SCT is a general theory built on the method of natural sciences, it can be applied to many different cultures and timelines.241 It has been used to account for the communicative processes, created by a group, used to foster the creation and sustenance of the group’s so-called “consciousness.”353 Below are a few points of how and why SCT can be useful in everyday situations.

Determining communication malfunctions. A question that happens a lot within SCT is, “Why do some fantasy themes spark a chain of sharing while other fail?” Groups fate as a part of a group have common experiences that predispose them to share fantasies which relate to their concerns. Therefore, these groups will have successful fantasy chains because they have more in common and are able to share more. When issues of power, sexism, role conflict, social rejection and other touchy topics come into play, groups members often find the direct confrontation of such issues to be unsettling. These fantasy chains may begin, but often do not last very long.

Assessing communication efforts and persuasive campaigns. This theory can provide insight within small groups, meetings, lectures and speeches, but it provides a greater use of assessing effects within the media. It is most heavily used within political campaigns. In the 1976 campaign, the investigators included the relationship between the media messages and the audience effects in their study. These studies analyzed the extent to which actual voting behavior can be anticipated by participation. By being able to predict the voting behaviors, political representatives could carefully craft their messages for different groups of people before giving their speeches and lectures to best benefit themselves.

The role of consciousness. Within fantasy chains there are three phases that keep the chains going. They are consciousness creating, consciousness raising and consciousness sustaining. In the first phase, people to come to create a commonality among their group. If the groups shares this common fantasy, consciousness raising will often fall in line next. And lastly, the two first points combined will create a sustaining fantasy chain that will last.29
A Dangerous Phenomenon

An important element of Symbolic Convergence Theory is the propensity of the phenomenon it illustrates to be used against the public good. Whether unintentionally or intentionally, SCT can be seen at work in revisionist history. The intentional malevolent use of SCT principles against the public good can be seen in the rash of “Fake News” campaigns in which false perceptions are fed to society in order to create a false, but widely believed, consensus (convergence) of belief. This is tantamount to intentionally creating false representation on the walls of Plato’s cave. (See Plato’s Allegory of the Cave above) Conversely, unintended convergence of negative social ideas are illustrated by Jonathan Haidt describing the formation of American social and political tribalism.

References: Structuration


**References: Symbolic Convergence Theory**


11. Jump up to a b c d e f g h i j k


14. Jump up to a b c d e f g h i j k


18. Jump up to a b c d e f g h i j k


30. Jump up to a b c d e f g h i j k


39. ^ BORMANN, ERNEST. “WHAT IS FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS?”. HTTP://WWW.VAYNE.COM/ FANTASY_THEME_ANALYSIS.HTM. External link in |website= (help)

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After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. What is the nature of leadership and the leadership process?
2. What are the processes associated with people coming to leadership positions?
3. How do leaders influence and move their followers to action?
4. What are the trait perspectives on leadership?
5. What are the behavioral perspectives on leadership?
6. What are the situational perspectives on leadership?
7. What does the concept “substitute for leadership” mean?
8. What are the characteristics of transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership?
9. How do different approaches and styles of leadership impact what is needed now?
baseball team in. Arroyo has been a baseball fan all of his life, and now his diligent work and his degree in sports management are paying off.

Arroyo knew he had a hard act to follow. The general manager whom John replaced, “T.J.” Grevin, was a much-loved old-timer who had been with the Sea Lions since their inception 14 years ago. John knew it would be difficult for whoever followed T.J., but he didn’t realize how ostracized and powerless he would feel. He tried a pep talk: “I’m the general manager—the CEO of this ball club! In time, the staff will respect me.” [Not a very good pep talk!]

After his first season ends, Arroyo is discouraged. Ticket and concession sales are down, and some long-time employees are rumored to be thinking about leaving. If John doesn’t turn things around, he knows his tenure with the Sea Lions will be short.

Questions: Is John correct in assuming that the staff will learn to respect him in time? What can John do to earn the loyalty of his staff and improve the ball club’s performance?

Outcomes: During the winter, John thinks long and hard about how he can earn the respect of the Sea Lions staff. Before the next season opener, John announces his plan: “So I can better understand what your day is like, I’m going to spend one day in each of your shoes. I’m trading places with each of you. I will be a ticket taker, a roving hot dog vendor, and a janitor. And I will be a marketer, and an accountant—for a day. You in turn will have the day off so you can enjoy the game from the general manager’s box.” The staff laughs and whistles appreciatively. Then the Springfield mascot, Sparky the Sea Lion, speaks up: “Hey Mr. Arroyo, are you going to spend a day in my flippers?” “You bet!” says John, laughing. The entire staff cheers.

John continues. “At the close of the season, we will honor a staff member with the T.J. Grevin Award for outstanding contributions to the Sea Lions organization. T.J. was such a great guy, it’s only right that we honor him.” The meeting ends, but John’s staff linger to tell him how excited they are about his ideas. Amidst the handshakes, he hopes that this year may be the best year yet for the Sea Lions.

Sarah Elizabeth Roisland is the manager of a district claims office for a large insurance company. Fourteen people work for her. The results of a recent attitude survey indicate that her employees have extremely high job satisfaction and motivation. Conflict is rare in Sarah’s office. Furthermore, productivity measures place her group among the most productive in the entire company. Her success has brought the company’s vice president of human resources to her office in an attempt to discover the secret to her success. Sarah’s peers, superiors, and workers all give the same answer: she is more than a good manager—she is an outstanding leader. She continually gets high performance from her employees and does so in such a way that they enjoy working for her.

There is no magic formula for becoming a good leader. There are, however, many identifiable reasons why some people are better and more effective leaders. Leaders, especially effective leaders, are not created by simply attending a one-day leadership workshop. Yet effective leadership skills are not something most people are born with. You can become an effective leader if you are willing to invest the time and energy to develop all of the “right stuff.”

According to Louise Axon, director of content strategy, and her colleagues at Harvard Business Publishing, in seeking management talent, leadership is an urgently needed quality in all managerial roles. Good leaders and good leadership are rare. Harvard management professor John P. Kotter notes that “there is a leadership crisis in the U.S. today,” and the late USC Professor Warren Bennis states that many of our organizations are overmanaged and underled.
The Nature of Leadership

1. What is the nature of leadership and the leadership process?

The many definitions of leadership each have a different emphasis. Some definitions consider leadership an act or behavior, such as initiating structure so group members know how to complete a task. Others consider a leader to be the center or nucleus of group activity, an instrument of goal achievement who has a certain personality, a form of persuasion and power, and the art of inducing compliance. Some look at leadership in terms of the management of group processes. In this view, a good leader develops a vision for the group, communicates that vision, orchestrates the group's energy and activity toward goal attainment, “[turns] a group of individuals into a team,” and “[transforms] good intentions into positive actions.”

Leadership is frequently defined as a social (interpersonal) influence relationship between two or more persons who depend on each other to attain certain mutual goals in a group situation. Effective leadership helps individuals and groups achieve their goals by focusing on the group's maintenance needs (the need for individuals to fit and work together by having, for example, shared norms) and task needs (the need for the group to make progress toward attaining the goal that brought them together).

Figure 2 Joe Madden at pitcher mound Joe Madden, manager of the Chicago Cubs baseball team, is lauded for both his managerial and leadership skills. Madden is a role model for managers competing in the business world. Managers can learn and profit from the Cubs skipper's philosophy of instilling an upbeat attitude with the team, staying loose but staying productive, and avoiding being the center of attention.

Leader versus Manager

The two dual concepts, leader and manager, leadership and management, are not interchangeable, nor are they redundant. The differences between the two can, however, be confusing. In many instances, to be a good manager one needs to be an effective leader. Many CEOs have been hired in the hope that their leadership skills, their ability to formulate a vision and get others to “buy into” that vision, will propel the organization forward. In addition, effective leadership often necessitates the ability to manage—to set goals; plan, devise, and implement strategy; make decisions and solve problems; and organize and control. For our purposes, the two sets of concepts can be contrasted in several ways.

First, we define the two concepts differently. In Management and Organizational Behavior, we defined management as a process consisting of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Here we define leadership as a social (interpersonal) influence relationship between two or more people who are dependent on each another for goal attainment.

Second, managers and leaders are commonly differentiated in terms of the processes through which they initially come to their position. Managers are generally appointed to their role. Even though many organizations appoint people to positions of leadership, leadership per se is a relationship that revolves around the followers' acceptance or rejection of the leader. Thus, leaders often emerge out of events that unfold among members of a group.

Third, managers and leaders often differ in terms of the types and sources of the power they exercise. Managers commonly derive their power from the larger organization. Virtually all organizations legitimize the use of certain “carrots and sticks” (rewards and punishments) as ways of securing the compliance of their employees. In other words, by virtue of the position that a manager occupies (president, vice president, department head, supervisor), certain “rights to act” (schedule production, contract to sell a product, hire and fire) accompany the position and its place within the hierarchy of authority. Leaders can also secure power and the ability to exercise influence using carrots and sticks;
however, it is much more common for leaders to derive power from followers’ perception of their knowledge (expertise), their personality and attractiveness, and the working relationship that has developed between leaders and followers.

From the perspective of those who are under the leader’s and manager’s influence, the motivation to comply often has a different base. The subordinate to a manager frequently complies because of the role authority of the manager, and because of the carrots and sticks that managers have at their disposal. The followers of a leader comply because they want to. Thus, leaders motivate primarily through intrinsic processes, while managers motivate primarily through extrinsic processes.

Finally, it is important to note that while managers may be successful in directing and supervising their subordinates, they often succeed or fail because of their ability or inability to lead.9 As noted above, effective leadership often calls for the ability to manage, and effective management often requires leadership.

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. What is the nature of leadership and the leadership process?

**The Leadership Process**

1. What are the processes associated with people coming to leadership positions?

Leadership is a process, a complex and dynamic exchange relationship built over time between leader and follower and between leader and the group of followers who depend on each other to attain a mutually desired goal.10 There are several key components to this “working relationship”: the leader, the followers, the context (situation), the leadership process per se, and the consequences (outcomes) (see Figure 3).11 Across time, each component interacts with and influences the other components, and whatever consequences (such as leader-follower trust) are created influence future interactions. As any one of the components changes, so too will leadership.12
Leaders are people who take charge of or guide the activities of others. They are often seen as the focus or orchestrator of group activity, the people who set the tone of the group so that it can move forward to attain its goals. Leaders provide the group with what is required to fulfill its maintenance and task-related needs. (Later in the chapter, we will return to the “leader as a person” as part of our discussion of the trait approach to leadership.)
The Context

Situations make demands on a group and its members, and not all situations are the same. Context refers to the situation that surrounds the leader and the followers. Situations are multidimensional. We discuss the context as it pertains to leadership in greater detail later in this chapter, but for now let’s look at it in terms of the task and task environment that confront the group. Is the task structured or unstructured? Are the goals of the group clear or ambiguous? Is there agreement or disagreement about goals? Is there a body of knowledge that can guide task performance? Is the task boring? Frustrating? Intrinsically satisfying? Is the environment complex or simple, stable or unstable? These factors create different contexts within which leadership unfolds, and each factor places a different set of needs and demands on the leader and on the followers.

The Process

The process of leadership is separate and distinct from the leader (the person who occupies a central role in the group). The process is a complex, interactive, and dynamic working relationship between leader and followers. This working relationship, built over time, is directed toward fulfilling the group’s maintenance and task needs. Part of the process consists of an exchange relationship between the leader and follower. The leader provides a resource directed toward fulfilling the group’s needs, and the group gives compliance, recognition, and esteem to the leader. To the extent that leadership is the exercise of influence, part of the leadership process is captured by the surrender of power by the followers and the exercise of influence over the followers by the leader. Thus, the leader influences the followers and the followers influence the leader, the context influences the leader and the followers, and both leader and followers influence the context.
The Consequences

A number of outcomes or consequences of the leadership process unfold between leader, follower, and situation. At the group level, two outcomes are important:

- Have the group's maintenance needs been fulfilled? That is, do members of the group like and get along with one another, do they have a shared set of norms and values, and have they developed a good working relationship? Have individuals' needs been fulfilled as reflected in attendance, motivation, performance, satisfaction, citizenship, trust, and maintenance of the group membership?
- Have the group's task needs been met? That is, there are also important consequences of the leadership process for individuals: attendance, motivation, performance, satisfaction, citizenship, trust, and maintenance of their group membership.

The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of the leadership process focuses attention on consequences associated with the leadership process. The theory views leadership as consisting of a number of dyadic relationships linking the leader with a follower. A leader-follower relationship tends to develop quickly and remains relatively stable over time. The quality of the relationship is reflected by the degree of mutual trust, loyalty, support, respect, and obligation. High- and low-quality relationships between a leader and each of his followers produce in and out groups among the followers. Members of the in group come to be key players, and high-quality exchange relationships tend to be associated with higher levels of performance, commitment, and satisfaction than are low-quality exchange relationships. Attitudinal similarity and extroversion appear to be associated with a high-quality leader-member relationship.

The nature of the leadership process varies substantially depending on the leader, the followers, and the situation and context. Thus, leadership is the function of an interaction between the leader, the follower, and the context.

The leadership context for the leader of a group of assembly line production workers differs from the context for the leader of a self-managing production team and from the context confronted by the lead scientists in a research laboratory. The leadership tactics that work in the first context might fail miserably in the latter two.

Examples

CATCHING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

How a Start-Up Finds the Right Leader

Start-ups, by their very nature, require innovation to bring new products and services to market. Along with establishing a new brand or product, the leader has to develop the relationships and processes that make a company succeed, or risk its early demise. While leading an established firm has its challenges, a start-up requires even more from a leader.

How critical is leadership to a start-up? Ask the four cofounders of the now-defunct PYP (Pretty Young Professionals), a website founded as a source of information for young professional women. What began as four young professional women working on a new start-up ended with hurt feelings and threats of legal action. In 2010, Kathryn Minshew, Amanda Pouchot, Caroline Ghosn, and Alex Cavoulacos decided to create the website and Minshew was named CEO (Cohan 2011a). Lines blurred about Minshew's authority and the ultimate look, feel, and direction of the website. Ideals about shared leadership, where the company was going, and how it
was going to get there ultimately got lost in the power shuffle. By June 2011, passwords were changed and legal actions began, and in August Minshew and Cavoulacos left altogether (Cohan 2011b).

When the legal haggling from PYP was over, Alex Cavoulacos and Kathryn Minshew, joined by Melissa McCreery, tried again. But this time, rather than hoping for the best, they put a leadership plan in place. Minshew was named CEO of the new start-up, The Daily Muse, with Cavoulacos as chief operating officer and McCreery as editor in chief. Rather than trusting to luck, the three cofounders based their team positions on strengths and personalities. Cavoulacos and McCreery agreed that Minshew's outgoing personality and confidence made her the proper choice as CEO (Casserly 2013).

No single trait will guarantee that a person can lead a start-up from idea to greatness, but a survey of successful entrepreneurs does show some common traits. According to David Barbash, a partner at Boston-based law firm Posternak Blankstein & Lund LLP, personality is paramount: “You can have great technology but if you're not a great communicator it may die in the lab” (Casserly 2013 n.p.). A start-up needs a leader who is confident and willing, if not eager, to face the future. According to Michelle Randall, a principal of Enriching Leadership International, start-up CEOs have to be willing to fundraise and not be too proud to beg (Casserly 2013). Peter Shankman, an entrepreneur and angel investor, says leaders have to be willing to make the hard decisions, even risking being the bad guy (Casserly 2013).

Gary Vaynerchuk credits his success to six factors. Angel investor, social media marketer, and early social media adopter, Vaynerchuk leveraged YouTube in its early years to market wine from the family's liquor store, eventually increasing sales from $3 million to $60 million a year (Clifford 2017). Gary believes good leaders recognize that they don't dictate to the market, but rather respond to where it is going. They have respect for and believe in other people, and have a strong work ethic, what Vaynerchuk called a “lunch pail work ethic”: they are willing to put in long hours because they love the work, not the perks. He also stresses that he loves technology and doesn't fear it, is obsessed with the youth of today, and is optimistic about people and the future of humanity (Vaynerchuk 2017).

Leading a startup requires more than simple management. It requires the right leader for the right company at the right time, which means matching the right management skills with the proper flexibility and drive to keep it all together and moving in the right direction.

Why would start-up leaders need different leadership qualities than someone managing an established firm?

CONCEPT CHECK

1. What are the processes associated with people coming to leadership positions?

Leader Emergence

How do leaders influence and move their followers to action?

Leaders hold a unique position in their groups, exercising influence and providing direction. Leonard Bernstein was part of the symphony, but his role as the New York Philharmonic conductor differed dramatically from that of the other symphony members. Besides conducting the orchestra, he created a vision for the symphony. In this capacity, leadership can be seen as a differentiated role and the nucleus of group activity.

Organizations have two kinds of leaders: formal and informal. A formal leader is that individual who is recognized by
those outside the group as the official leader of the group. Often, the formal leader is appointed by the organization to serve in a formal capacity as an agent of the organization. Jack Welch was the formal leader of General Electric, and Leonard Bernstein was the formal leader of the symphony. Practically all managers act as formal leaders as part of their assigned role. Organizations that use self-managed work teams allow members of the team to select the individual who will serve as their team leader. When this person's role is sanctioned by the formal organization, these team leaders become formal leaders. Increasingly, leaders in organizations will be those who “best sell” their ideas on how to complete a project—persuasiveness and inspiration are important ingredients in the leadership equation, especially in high-involvement organizations. 22

Informal leaders, by contrast, are not assigned by the organization. The informal leader is that individual whom members of the group acknowledge as their leader. Athletic teams often have informal leaders, individuals who exert considerable influence on team members even though they hold no official, formal leadership position. In fact, most work groups contain at least one informal leader. Just like formal leaders, informal leaders can benefit or harm an organization depending on whether their influence encourages group members to behave consistently with organizational goals.

As we have noted, the terms leader and manager are not synonymous. Grace Hopper, retired U.S. Navy admiral, draws a distinction between leading and managing: “You don’t manage people, you manage things. You lead people.” 23 Informal leaders often have considerable leverage over their colleagues. Traditionally, the roles of informal leaders have not included the total set of management responsibilities because an informal leader does not always exercise the functions of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. However, high-involvement organizations frequently encourage their formal and informal leaders to exercise the full set of management roles. Many consider such actions necessary for self-managing work teams to succeed. Informal leaders are acknowledged by the group, and the group willingly responds to their leadership.

**Paths to Leadership**

People come to leadership positions through two dynamics. In many instances, people are put into positions of leadership by forces outside the group. University-based ROTC programs and military academies (like West Point) formally groom people to be leaders. We refer to this person as the designated leader (in this instance the designated and formal leader are the same person). Emergent leaders, on the other hand, arise from the dynamics and processes that unfold within and among a group of individuals as they endeavor to achieve a collective goal.

A variety of processes help us understand how leaders emerge. Gerald Salancik and Jeffrey Pfeffer observe that power to influence others flows to those individuals who possess the critical and scarce resources (often knowledge and expertise) that a group needs to overcome a major problem. 24 They note that the dominant coalition and leadership in American corporations during the 1950s was among engineers, because organizations were engaged in competition based on product design. The power base in many organizations shifted to marketing as competition became a game of advertising aimed at differentiating products in the consumer’s mind. About 10–15 years ago, power and leadership once again shifted, this time to people with finance and legal backgrounds, because the critical contingencies facing many organizations were mergers, acquisitions, hostile takeovers, and creative financing. Thus, Salancik and Pfeffer reason that power and thus leadership flow to those individuals who have the ability to help an organization or group [overcome its critical contingencies]. As the challenges facing a group change, so too may the flow of power and leadership.

Many leaders emerge out of the needs of the situation. Different situations call for different configurations of knowledge, skills, and abilities. A group often turns to the member who possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the group requires to achieve its goals. 25 People surrender their power to individuals whom they believe will make meaningful contributions to attaining group goals. 26 The individual to whom power is surrendered is often a member of the group who is in good standing. As a result of this member's contributions to the group's goals, he has accumulated idiosyncrasy credits (a form of competency-based status). These credits give the individual a status that allows him to influence the direction that the group takes as it works to achieve its goals. 27

It is important to recognize that the traits possessed by certain individuals contribute significantly to their emergence as leaders. Research indicates that people are unlikely to follow individuals who, for example, do not display drive, self-confidence, knowledge of the situation, honesty, and integrity. 274
Leadership as an Exercise of Influence

As we have noted, leadership is the exercise of influence over those who depend on one another for attaining a mutual goal in a group setting. But how do leaders effectively exercise this influence? Social or (interpersonal) influence is one's ability to effect a change in the motivation, attitudes, and/or behaviors of others. Power, then, essentially answers the “how” question: How do leaders influence their followers? The answer often is that a leader's social influence is the source of his power.

French and Raven provide us with a useful typology that identifies the sources and types of power. As a review those types of power are reward power, coercive power, referent power, expert power, and legitimate power. 28

As you know, not all forms of power are equally effective (see Figure 5), nor is a leader's total power base the simple sum of the powers at his disposal. Different types of power elicit different forms of compliance: Leaders who rely on coercive power often alienate followers who resist their influence attempts. Leaders who rely on reward power develop followers who are very measured in their responses to [what?]; the use of rewards often leads people to think in terms of “How much am I getting?” or “How much should I give?” or “Am I breaking even?” The use of referent power produces identification with the leader and his cause. The use of rationality, expert power, and/or moralistic appeal generally elicits commitment and the internalization of the leader's goals. 29

![Figure 5 The Leader-Follower Power Relationship](image)

Leaders who use referent and expert power commonly experience a favorable response in terms of follower satisfaction and performance. Research suggests that rationality is the most effective influence tactic in terms of its impact on follower commitment, motivation, performance, satisfaction, and group effectiveness.30

Reward and legitimate power (that is, relying on one's position to influence others) produce inconsistent results. Sometimes these powers lead to follower performance and satisfaction, yet they also sometimes fail. Coercive power can result in favorable performance, yet follower and resistance dissatisfaction are not uncommon.

Good leaders, whether formal or informal, develop many sources of power. Leaders who rely solely on their legitimate power and authority seldom generate the influence necessary to help their organization and its members succeed. In the process of building their power base, effective leaders have discovered that the use of coercive power tends to dilute the effectiveness of other powers, while the development and use of referent power tends to magnify the effectiveness of other forms of power. A compliment or reward from a person we like generally has greater value than one from someone we dislike, and punishment from someone we love (such as “tough love” from a parent) is less offensive than the pain inflicted by someone we dislike.31

In sum, one key to effective leadership, especially as it pertains to the exercise of social and interpersonal influence,
relates to the type of power employed by the leader. Overall leader effectiveness will be higher when people follow because they want to follow. This is much more likely to happen when the leader’s influence flows out of intrinsic such as rationality, expertise, moralistic appeal, and/or referent power.

Leadership is also about having a vision and communicating that vision to others in such a way that it provides meaning for the follower. Language, ritual, drama, myths, symbolic constructions, and stories are some of the tools leaders use to capture the attention of their “followers to be” to evoke emotion and to manage the meaning “of the task (challenges) facing the group.” These tools help the leader influence the attitudes, motivation, and behavior of their followers.

**Influence-Based Leadership Styles**

Many writers and researchers have explored how leaders can use power to address the needs of various situations. One view holds that in traditional organizations members expect to be told what to do and are willing to follow highly structured directions. Individuals attracted to high-involvement organizations, however, want to make their own decisions, expect their leaders to allow them to do so, and are willing to accept and act on this responsibility. This suggests that a leader may use and employ power in a variety of ways.

**The Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum**

In the 1950s, Tannenbaum and Schmidt created a continuum (see Figure 6) along which leadership styles range from authoritarian to extremely high levels of worker freedom. Subsequent to Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s work, researchers adapted the continuum by categorizing leader power styles as autocratic (boss-centered), participative (workers are consulted and involved), or free-rein (members are assigned the work and decide on their own how to do it; the leader relinquishes the active assumption of the role of leadership).

![Figure 6 Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Leadership Continuum](source: Modified from R. Tannenbaum and W. H. Schmidt. May–June 1971. How to choose a leadership pattern. Harvard Business Review, 167.)
Theory X and Theory Y Leaders

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y posits two different sets of attitudes about the individual as an organizational member. Theory X and Y thinking gives rise to two different styles of leadership. The Theory X leader assumes that the average individual dislikes work and is incapable of exercising adequate self-direction and self-control. As a consequence, they exert a highly controlling leadership style. In contrast, Theory Y leaders believe that people have creative capacities, as well as both the ability and desire to exercise self-direction and self-control. They typically allow organizational members significant amounts of discretion in their jobs and encourage them to participate in departmental and organizational decision-making. Theory Y leaders are much more likely to adopt involvement-oriented approaches to leadership and organically designed organizations for their leadership group.

Theory X and Theory Y thinking and leadership are not strictly an American phenomenon. Evidence suggests that managers from different parts of the global community commonly hold the same view. A study of 3,600 managers from 14 countries reveals that most of them held assumptions about human nature that could best be classified as Theory X. Even though managers might publicly endorse the merits of participatory management, most of them doubted their workers’ capacities to exercise self-direction and self-control and to contribute creatively.

Directive/Permissive Leadership Styles

Contemplating the central role of problem-solving in management and leadership, Jan P. Muczyk and Bernard C. Reimann of Cleveland State University offer an interesting perspective on four different leadership styles (see Figure 7) that revolve around decision-making and implementation processes.

A directive autocrat retains power, makes unilateral decisions, and closely supervises workers’ activities. This style of leadership is seen as appropriate when circumstances require quick decisions and organizational members are new, inexperienced, or underqualified. A doctor in charge of a hastily constructed shelter for victims of a tornado may use this style to command nonmedical volunteers.

The permissive autocrat mixes his or her use of power by retaining decision-making power but permitting organizational members to exercise discretion when executing those decisions. This leader behavior is recommended when decision-making time is limited, when tasks are routine, or when organizational members have sufficient expertise to determine appropriate role behaviors.
Also sharing power is the directive democrat, who encourages participative decision-making but retains the power to direct team members in the execution of their roles. This style is appropriate when followers have valuable opinions and ideas, but one person needs to coordinate the execution of the ideas. A surgeon might allow the entire surgical team to participate in developing a plan for a surgical procedure. Once surgery begins, however, the surgeon is completely in charge.

Finally, the permissive democrat shares power with group members, soliciting involvement in both decision-making and execution. This style is appropriate when participation has both informational and motivational value, when time permits group decision-making, when group members are capable of improving decision quality, and when followers are capable of exercising self-management in their performance of work.

The permissive democratic approach to leadership is characteristic of leadership in high-involvement organizations. Here, leaders act as facilitators, process consultants, network builders, conflict managers, inspirationalists, coaches, teachers/mentors, and cheerleaders. Such is the role of Ralph Stayer, founder, owner, and CEO of Johnsonville Foods. He defines himself as his company’s philosopher. At Quad/Graphics, president Harry V. Quadracci is a permissive democrat because he encourages all Quad employees to play a major role in decision-making and execution as they manage their teams as independent profit centers.

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. What is the role of the leader and follower in the leadership process?
2. How do the theories of Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s leadership continuum and McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y attempt to define leadership?

**The Trait Approach to Leadership**

1. What are the trait perspectives on leadership?

Ancient Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Chinese scholars were keenly interested in leaders and leadership. Their writings portray leaders as heroes. Homer, in his poem *The Odyssey*, portrays Odysseus during and after the Trojan War as a great leader who had vision and self-confidence. His son Telemachus, under the tutelage of Mentor, developed his father’s courage and leadership skills. Out of such stories there emerged the “great man” theory of leadership, and a starting point for the contemporary study of leadership.

The great man theory of leadership states that some people are born with the necessary attributes to be great leaders. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Joan of Arc, Catherine the Great, Napoleon, and Mahatma Gandhi are cited as naturally great leaders, born with a set of personal qualities that made them effective leaders. Even today, the belief that truly great leaders are born is common. For example, Kenneth Labich, writer for *Fortune* magazine, commented that “the best leaders seem to possess a God-given spark.”

During the early 1900s, scholars endeavored to understand leaders and leadership. They wanted to know, from an organizational perspective, what characteristics leaders hold in common in the hope that people with these characteristics could be identified, recruited, and placed in key organizational positions. This gave rise to early research efforts and to what is referred to as the trait approach to leadership. Prompted by the great man theory of leadership and the emerging interest in understanding what leadership is, researchers focused on the leader—Who is a leader? What are the distinguishing characteristics of the great and effective leaders? The great man theory of leadership holds that some people are born with a set of personal qualities that make truly great leaders. Mahatma Gandhi is often cited as a naturally great leader.
Leader Trait Research

Ralph Stogdill, while on the faculty at The Ohio State University, pioneered our modern (late 20th century) study of leadership. Scholars taking the trait approach attempted to identify physiological (appearance, height, and weight), demographic (age, education, and socioeconomic background), personality (dominance, self-confidence, and aggressiveness), intellecitive (intelligence, decisiveness, judgment, and knowledge), task-related (achievement drive, initiative, and persistence), and social characteristics (sociability and cooperativeness) with leader emergence and leader effectiveness. After reviewing several hundred studies of leader traits, Stogdill in 1974 described the successful leader this way:

The [successful] leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other person's behavior, and capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

The last three decades of the 20th century witnessed continued exploration of the relationship between traits and both leader emergence and leader effectiveness. Edwin Locke from the University of Maryland and a number of his research associates, in their recent review of the trait research, observed that successful leaders possess a set of core characteristics that are different from those of other people. Although these core traits do not solely determine whether a person will be a leader—or a successful leader—they are seen as preconditions that endow people with leadership potential. Among the core traits identified are:

- **Drive**—a high level of effort, including a strong desire for achievement as well as high levels of ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative
- **Leadership motivation**—an intense desire to lead others
- **Honesty and integrity**—a commitment to the truth (nondeceit), where word and deed correspond
- **Self-confidence**—an assurance in one's self, one's ideas, and one's ability
- **Cognitive ability**—conceptually skilled, capable of exercising good judgment, having strong analytical abilities, possessing the capacity to think strategically and multidimensionally
- **Knowledge of the business**—a high degree of understanding of the company, industry, and technical matters
- **Other traits**—charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility/adaptiveness

While leaders may be “people with the right stuff,” effective leadership requires more than simply possessing the correct set of motives and traits. Knowledge, skills, ability, vision, strategy, and effective vision implementation are all necessary for the person who has the “right stuff” to realize their leadership potential. According to Locke, people endowed with these traits engage in behaviors that are associated with leadership. As followers, people are attracted to and inclined to follow individuals who display, for example, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, and the motivation to lead.

Personality psychologists remind us that behavior is a result of an interaction between the person and the situation—that is, Behavior = f [(Person) (Situation)]. To this, psychologist Walter Mischel adds the important observation that personality tends to get expressed through an individual's behavior in “weak” situations and to be suppressed in “strong” situations. A strong situation is one with strong behavioral norms and rules, strong incentives, clear expectations, and rewards for a particular behavior. Our characterization of the mechanistic organization with its well-defined hierarchy of authority, jobs, and standard operating procedures exemplifies a strong situation. The organic social system exemplifies a weak situation. From a leadership perspective, a person's traits play a stronger role in their leader behavior and ultimately leader effectiveness when the situation permits the expression of their disposition. Thus, personality traits prominently shape leader behavior in weak situations.

Finally, about the validity of the “great person approach to leadership”: Evidence accumulated to date does not provide a strong base of support for the notion that leaders are born. Yet, the study of twins at the University of Minnesota leaves open the possibility that part of the answer might be found in our genes. Many personality traits and vocational interests (which might be related to one's interest in assuming responsibility for others and the motivation to lead) have been
found to be related to our “genetic dispositions” as well as to our life experiences. Each core trait recently identified by Locke and his associates traces a significant part of its existence to life experiences. Thus, a person is not born with self-confidence. Self-confidence is developed, honesty and integrity are a matter of personal choice, motivation to lead comes from within the individual and is within his control, and knowledge of the business can be acquired. While cognitive ability does in part find its origin in the genes, it still needs to be developed. Finally, drive, as a dispositional trait, may also have a genetic component, but it too can be self- and other-encouraged. It goes without saying that none of these ingredients are acquired overnight.

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. What are the trait perspectives on leadership?

**Behavioral Approaches to Leadership**

1. What are the behavioral perspectives on leadership?

The nearly four decades of research that focused on identifying the personal traits associated with the emergence of leaders and leader effectiveness resulted in two observations. First, leader traits are important—people who are endowed with the “right stuff” (drive, self-confidence, honesty, and integrity) are more likely to emerge as leaders and to be effective leaders than individuals who do not possess these characteristics. Second, traits are only a part of the story. Traits only account for part of why someone becomes a leader and why they are (or are not) effective leaders.

Still under the influence of the great man theory of leadership, researchers continued to focus on the leader in an effort to understand leadership—who emerges and what constitutes effective leadership. Researchers then began to reason that maybe the rest of the story could be understood by looking at what it is that leaders do. Thus, we now turn our attention to leader behaviors and the behavioral approaches to leadership.

It is now common to think of effective leadership in terms of what leaders do. CEOs and management consultants agree that effective leaders display trust in their employees, develop a vision, keep their cool, encourage risk, bring expertise into the work setting, invite dissent, and focus everyone’s attention on that which is important. William Arruda, in a *Fortune* article, noted that “organizations with strong coaching cultures report their revenue to be above average, compared to their peer group.” Sixty-five percent of employees “from strong coaching cultures rated themselves as highly engaged,” compared to 13 percent of employees worldwide. Jonathan Anthony calls himself an intrapreneur and corporate disorganizer, because same-old, same-old comms practices are dying in front of our eyes. Apple founder Steve Jobs believed that the best leaders are coaches and team cheerleaders. Similar views have been frequently echoed by management consultant Tom Peters.

During the late 1940s, two major research programs—The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan leadership studies—were launched to explore leadership from a behavioral perspective.

**The Ohio State University Studies**

A group of Ohio State University researchers, under the direction of Ralph Stogdill, began an extensive and systematic series of studies to identify leader behaviors associated with effective group performance. Their results identified two major sets of leader behaviors: consideration and initiating structure.

**Consideration** is the “relationship-oriented” behavior of a leader. It is instrumental in creating and maintaining good relationships (that is, addressing the group’s maintenance needs) with organizational members. Consideration behaviors include being supportive and friendly, representing people’s interests, communicating openly with group members, recognizing them, respecting their ideas, and sharing concern for their feelings.
**Initiating structure** involves “task-oriented” leader behaviors. It is instrumental in the efficient use of resources to attain organizational goals, thereby addressing the group's task needs. Initiating structure behaviors include scheduling work, deciding what is to be done (and how and when to do it), providing direction to organizational members, planning, coordinating, problem-solving, maintaining standards of performance, and encouraging the use of uniform procedures.

After consideration and initiating structure behaviors were first identified, many leaders believed that they had to behave one way or the other. If they initiated structure, they could not be considerate, and vice versa. It did not take long, however, to recognize that leaders can simultaneously display any combination of both behaviors.

The Ohio State studies are important because they identified two critical categories of behavior that distinguish one leader from another. Both consideration and initiating structure behavior can significantly impact work attitudes and behaviors. Unfortunately, the effects of consideration and initiating structure are not consistent from situation to situation. In some of the organizations studied, for example, high levels of initiating structure increased performance. In other organizations, the amount of initiating structure seemed to make little difference. Although most organizational members reported greater satisfaction when leaders acted considerately, consideration behavior appeared to have no clear effect on performance.

Initially, these mixed findings were disappointing to researchers and managers alike. It had been hoped that a profile of the most effective leader behaviors could be identified so that leaders could be trained in the best ways to behave. Research made clear, however, that there is no one best style of leader behavior for all situations.

**The University of Michigan Studies**

At about the same time that the Ohio State studies were underway, researchers at the University of Michigan also began to investigate leader behaviors. As at Ohio State, the Michigan researchers attempted to identify behavioral elements that differentiated effective from ineffective leaders. The two types of leader behavior that stand out in these studies are job centered and organizational member centered. Job-centered behaviors are devoted to supervisory functions, such as planning, scheduling, coordinating work activities, and providing the resources needed for task performance. Employee-member-centered behaviors include consideration and support for organizational members. These dimensions of behavior, of course, correspond closely to the dimensions of initiating structure and consideration identified at Ohio State. The similarity of the findings from two independent groups of researchers added to their credibility. As the Ohio State researchers had done, the Michigan researchers also found that any combination of the two behaviors was possible.

The studies at Michigan are significant because they reinforce the importance of leader behavior. They also provide the basis for later theories that identify specific, effective matches of work situations and leader behaviors. Subsequent research at Michigan and elsewhere has found additional behaviors associated with effective leadership: support, work facilitation, goal emphasis, and interaction facilitation.

These four behaviors are important to the successful functioning of the group in that support and interaction facilitation contribute to the group's maintenance needs, and goal emphasis and work facilitation contribute to the group's task needs. The Michigan researchers also found that these four behaviors do not need to be brought to the group by the leader. In essence, the leader's real job is to set the tone and create the climate that ensure these critical behaviors are present.

**The Leadership Grid®**

Much of the credit for disseminating knowledge about important leader behaviors must go to Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, who developed a method for classifying styles of leadership compatible with many of the ideas from the Ohio State and Michigan studies. In their classification scheme, concern for results (production) emphasizes output,
cost effectiveness, and (in for-profit organizations) a concern for profits. Concern for people involves promoting working relationships and paying attention to issues of importance to group members. As shown in Figure 9, the Leadership Grid® demonstrates that any combination of these two leader concerns is possible, and five styles of leadership are highlighted here.

**Figure 9** Blake and Mouton’s Managerial Grid® Source: Adapted from R. McKee and B. Carlson. 1999. The Power to Change, p.16.

Blake and Mouton contend that the sound (contribute and commit) leader (a high concern for results and people, or 9,9) style is universally the most effective. While the Leadership Grid® is appealing and well structured, research to date suggests that there is no universally effective style of leadership (9,9 or otherwise). There are, however, well-identified situations in which a 9,9 style is unlikely to be effective. Organizational members of high-involvement organizations...
who have mastered their job duties require little production-oriented leader behavior. Likewise, there is little time for people-oriented behavior during an emergency. Finally, evidence suggests that the “high-high” style may be effective when the situation calls for high levels of initiating structure. Under these conditions, the initiation of structure is more acceptable, favorably affecting follower satisfaction and performance, when the leader is also experienced as warm, supportive, and considerate.69

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. What are the behavioral approaches to defining leadership?
2. What roles do gender and the popular perceptions of gender roles have on views of leadership traits?

**Situational (Contingency) Approaches to Leadership**

1. What are the situational perspectives on leadership?

As early as 1948, Ralph Stogdill stated that “the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader.”70 In addition, it had been observed that two major leader behaviors, initiating structure and consideration, didn't always lead to equally positive outcomes. That is, there are times when initiating structure results in performance increases and follower satisfaction, and there are times when the results are just the opposite. Contradictory findings such as this lead researchers to ask “Under what conditions are the results positive in nature?” and “When and why are they negative at other times?” Obviously, situational differences and key contingencies are at work.

Several theories have been advanced to address this issue. These are Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership, the path-goal theory of leader effectiveness, Hersey and Blanchard's life cycle theory, cognitive resource theory, the decision tree, and the decision process theory.71 We explore two of the better-known situational theories of leadership, Fred Fiedler's contingency model and Robert J. House's path-goal theory, here. Victor Vroom, Phillip Yetton, and Arthur Jago's decision tree model also applies.

**Fiedler’s Contingency Model**

One of the earliest, best-known, and most controversial situation-contingent leadership theories was set forth by Fred E. Fiedler from the University of Washington.72 This theory is known as the contingency theory of leadership. According to Fiedler, organizations attempting to achieve group effectiveness through leadership must assess the leader according to an underlying trait, assess the situation faced by the leader, and construct a proper match between the two.

**The Leader’s Trait**

Leaders are asked about their least-preferred coworker (LPC), the person with whom they least like to work. The most popular interpretation of the LPC score is that it reflects a leader's underlying disposition toward others—for example: pleasant/unpleasant, cold/warm, friendly/unfriendly, and untrustworthy/trustworthy. (You can examine your own LPC score by completing the LPC self-assessment on the following page.)

Fiedler states that leaders with high LPC scores are relationship oriented—they need to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships. They tend to evaluate their least-preferred coworkers in fairly favorable terms. Task
accomplishment is a secondary need to this type of leader and becomes important only after the need for relationships is reasonably well satisfied. In contrast, leaders with low LPC scores tend to evaluate the individuals with whom they least like to work fairly negatively. They are task-oriented people, and only after tasks have been accomplished are low-LPC leaders likely to work on establishing good social and interpersonal relations.

**The Situational Factor**

Some situations favor leaders more than others do. To Fiedler, situational favorableness is the degree to which leaders have control and influence and therefore feel that they can determine the outcomes of a group interaction.\(^7\) Several years later, Fiedler changed his situational factor from situational favorability to situational control—where situational control essentially refers to the degree to which a leader can influence the group process.\(^8\) Three factors work together to determine how favorable a situation is to a leader. In order of importance, they are (1) leader-member relations—the degree of the group's acceptance of the leader, their ability to work well together, and members' level of loyalty to the leader; (2) task structure—the degree to which the task specifies a detailed, unambiguous goal and how to achieve it; and (3) position power—a leader's direct ability to influence group members. The situation is most favorable for a leader when the relationship between the leader and group members is good, when the task is highly structured, and when the leader's position power is strong (cell 1 in Figure 10). The least-favorable situation occurs under poor leader-member relations, an unstructured task, and weak position power (cell 8).

![Figure 10](image)

**Figure 10** Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leader-Situation Matches Source: Adapted from F. E. Fiedler and M. M. Chemers. 1974. Leadership and effective management. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
**Leader-Situation Matches**

Some combinations of leaders and situations work well; others do not. In search of the best combinations, Fiedler examined a large number of leadership situations. He argued that most leaders have a relatively unchangeable or dominant style, so organizations need to design job situations to fit the leader.\(^75\)

While the model has not been fully tested and tests have often produced mixed or contradictory findings,\(^76\) Fiedler's research indicates that relationship-oriented (high-LPC) leaders are much more effective under conditions of intermediate favorability than under either highly favorable or highly unfavorable situations. Fiedler attributes the success of relationship-oriented leaders in situations with intermediate favorability to the leader's nondirective, permissive attitude; a more directive attitude could lead to anxiety in followers, conflict in the group, and a lack of cooperation.

For highly favorable and unfavorable situations, task-oriented leaders (those with a low LPC) are very effective. As tasks are accomplished, a task-oriented leader allows the group to perform its highly structured tasks without imposing more task-directed behavior. The job gets done without the need for the leader's direction. Under unfavorable conditions, task-oriented behaviors, such as setting goals, detailing work methods, and guiding and controlling work behaviors, move the group toward task accomplishment.

As might be expected, leaders with mid-range LPC scores can be more effective in a wider range of situations than high- or low-LPC leaders.\(^77\) Under conditions of low favorability, for example, a middle-LPC leader can be task oriented to achieve performance, but show consideration for and allow organizational members to proceed on their own under conditions of high situational favorability.

**Controversy over the Theory**

Although Fiedler's theory often identifies appropriate leader-situation matches and has received broad support, it is not without critics. Some note that it characterizes leaders through reference to their attitudes or personality traits (LPC) while it explains the leader's effectiveness through their behaviors—those with a particular trait will behave in a particular fashion. The theory fails to make the connection between the least-preferred coworker attitude and subsequent behaviors. In addition, some tests of the model have produced mixed or contradictory findings.\(^78\) Finally, what is the true meaning of the LPC score—exactly what is being revealed by a person who sees their least-preferred coworker in positive or negative terms? Robert J. House and Ram N. Aditya recently noted that, in spite of the criticisms, there has been substantial support for Fiedler's theory.\(^79\)

**Path-Goal Theory**

Robert J. House and Martin Evans, while on the faculty at the University of Toronto, developed a useful leadership theory. Like Fiedler's, it asserts that the type of leadership needed to enhance organizational effectiveness depends on the situation in which the leader is placed. Unlike Fiedler, however, House and Evans focus on the leader's observable behavior. Thus, managers can either match the situation to the leader or modify the leader's behavior to fit the situation.

The model of leadership advanced by House and Evans is called the **path-goal theory of leadership** because it suggests that an effective leader provides organizational members with a path to a valued goal. According to House, the motivational function of the leader consists of increasing personal payoffs to organizational members for work-goal attainment, and making the path to these payoffs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route.\(^80\)

Effective leaders therefore provide rewards that are valued by organizational members. These rewards may be pay, recognition, promotions, or any other item that gives members an incentive to work hard to achieve goals. Effective leaders also give clear instructions so that ambiguities about work are reduced and followers understand how to do their jobs effectively. They provide coaching, guidance, and training so that followers can perform the task expected of
them. They also remove barriers to task accomplishment, correcting shortages of materials, inoperative machinery, or interfering policies.

**An Appropriate Match**

According to the path-goal theory, the challenge facing leaders is basically twofold. First, they must analyze situations and identify the most appropriate leadership style. For example, experienced employees who work on a highly structured assembly line don’t need a leader to spend much time telling them how to do their jobs—they already know this. The leader of an archeological expedition, though, may need to spend a great deal of time telling inexperienced laborers how to excavate and care for the relics they uncover.

Second, leaders must be flexible enough to use different leadership styles as appropriate. To be effective, leaders must engage in a wide variety of behaviors. Without an extensive repertoire of behaviors at their disposal, a leader’s effectiveness is limited. All team members will not, for example, have the same need for autonomy. The leadership style that motivates organizational members with strong needs for autonomy (participative leadership) is different from that which motivates and satisfies members with weaker autonomy needs (directive leadership). The degree to which leadership behavior matches situational factors will determine members’ motivation, satisfaction, and performance (see Figure 11).

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**Behavior Dimensions**

According to path-goal theory, there are four important dimensions of leader behavior, each of which is suited to a particular set of situational demands.

- **Supportive leadership**—At times, effective leaders demonstrate concern for the well-being and personal needs of organizational members. Supportive leaders are friendly, approachable, and considerate to individuals in the workplace. Supportive leadership is especially effective when an organizational member is performing a boring, stressful, frustrating, tedious, or unpleasant task. If a task is difficult and a group member has low self-esteem, supportive leadership can reduce some of the person's anxiety, increase his confidence, and increase satisfaction and determination as well.

- **Directive leadership**—At times, effective leaders set goals and performance expectations, let organizational
members know what is expected, provide guidance, establish rules and procedures to guide work, and schedule and coordinate the activities of members. Directive leadership is called for when role ambiguity is high. Removing uncertainty and providing needed guidance can increase members’ effort, job satisfaction, and job performance.

- **Participative leadership**—At times, effective leaders consult with group members about job-related activities and consider their opinions and suggestions when making decisions. Participative leadership is effective when tasks are unstructured. Participative leadership is used to great effect when leaders need help in identifying work procedures and where followers have the expertise to provide this help.

- **Achievement-oriented leadership**—At times, effective leaders set challenging goals, seek improvement in performance, emphasize excellence, and demonstrate confidence in organizational members’ ability to attain high standards. Achievement-oriented leaders thus capitalize on members’ needs for achievement and use goal-setting theory to great advantage.

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. Identify and describe the variables presented in Fiedler’s theory of leadership.
2. What are the leadership behaviors in the path-goal theory of leadership?
3. What role does culture have in how leadership is viewed?
4. What are the differences between the trait, behavioral, and situational approaches to defining leadership?

**Substitutes for and Neutralizers of Leadership**

1. What does the concept “substitute for leadership” mean?

Several factors have been discovered that can substitute for or neutralize the effects of leader behavior (see Table 1). **Substitutes** for leadership behavior can clarify role expectations, motivate organizational members, or satisfy members (making it unnecessary for the leader to attempt to do so). In some cases, these substitutes supplement the behavior of a leader. Sometimes it is a group member’s characteristics that make leadership less necessary, as when a master craftsperson or highly skilled worker performs up to his or her own high standards without needing outside prompting. Sometimes the task’s characteristics take over, as when the work itself—solving an interesting problem or working on a familiar job—is intrinsically satisfying. Sometimes the characteristics of the organization make leadership less necessary, as when work rules are so clear and specific that workers know exactly what they must do without help from the leader (see An Inside Look at flat management structure and the orchestra with no leader).
### Table 1: Substitutes for and Neutralizers of Leader Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive or Neutralizer</th>
<th>Leader Behavior Influenced</th>
<th>Substitute Leadership</th>
<th>Instrumental Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Subordinate Characteristics:</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Experience, ability, training</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Professional” orientation</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indifference toward rewards offered by organization</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Task Characteristics:</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Structured, routine, unambiguous task</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feedback provided by task</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intrinsically satisfying task</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Organization Characteristics:</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Cohesive work group</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low position power (leader lacks control over organizational rewards)</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Formalization (explicit plans, goals, areas of responsibility)</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td>Substitute Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inflexibility (rigid, unyielding rules and procedures)</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Leader located apart from subordinates with only limited communication possible</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td>Neutralizer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Leadership in organizations by G. A. Yukl.*

**Neutralizers** of leadership, on the other hand, are not helpful; they prevent leaders from acting as they wish. A computer-paced assembly line, for example, prevents a leader from using initiating structure behavior to pace the line. A union contract that specifies that workers be paid according to seniority prevents a leader from dispensing merit-based pay. Sometimes, of course, neutralizers can be beneficial. Union contracts, for example, clarify disciplinary proceedings and identify the responsibilities of both management and labor. Leaders must be aware of the presence of neutralizers and their effects so that they can eliminate troublesome neutralizers or take advantage of any potential benefits that accompany them (such as the clarity of responsibilities provided by a union contract). If a leader's effectiveness is being neutralized by a poor communication system, for example, the leader might try to remove the neutralizer by developing (or convincing the organization to develop) a more effective system.

Followers differ considerably in their *focus of attention* while at work, thereby affecting the effectiveness of the act of leadership. Focus of attention is an employee's cognitive orientation while at work. It reflects what and how strongly an individual thinks about various objects, events, or phenomena while physically present at work. Focus of attention reflects an individual difference in that not all individuals have the same cognitive orientation while at work—some think a great deal about their job, their coworkers, their leader, or off-the-job factors, while others daydream. An employee's focus of attention has both “trait” and “state” qualities. For example, there is a significant amount of minute-by-minute variation in an employee's focus of attention (the “state” component), and there is reasonable consistency in the categories of events that employees think about while they are at work (the “trait” component).

Research suggests that the more followers focus on off-job (nonleader) factors, the less they will react to the leader's behaviors. Thus, a strong focus on one's life “away from work” (for example, time with family and friends) tends to neutralize the motivational, attitudinal, and/or behavioral effects associated with any particular leader behavior. It has also been observed, however, that a strong focus on the leader, either positive or negative, enhances the impact that the leader's behaviors have on followers. 91
**MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP**

**You Are Now the Leader**

Leading and managing are two very different things. Being a manager means something more than gaining authority or charge over former colleagues. With the title does come the power to affect company outcomes, but it also comes with something more: the power to shape the careers and personal growth of subordinates.

According to Steve Keating, a senior manager at the Toro Company, it is important not to assume that being made a manager automatically makes you a leader. Rather, being a manager means having the opportunity to lead. Enterprises need managers to guide processes, but the employees—the people—need a leader. Keating believes that leaders need a mindset that emphasizes people, and the leader's job is to help the people in the organization to be successful. According to Keating, “If you don't care for people, you can't lead them” (Hakim 2017 n.p.).

For someone who has been promoted over his peers, ground rules are essential. “Promotion doesn't mean the end of friendship but it does change it,” according to Keating. If a peer has been promoted, rather than grouse and give in to envy, it is important to step back and look at the new manager; take a hard look at why the peer was promoted and what skill or characteristic made you a less appealing fit for the position (Hakim 2017).

Carol Walker, president of Prepared to Lead, a management consulting firm, advises new managers to develop a job philosophy. She urges new managers to develop a core philosophy that provides a guide to the day-to-day job of leading. She urges managers to build up the people they are leading and work as a "servant leader." The manager's perspective should be on employee growth and success. Leaders must bear in mind that employees don't work for the manager; they work for the organization—and for themselves. Managers coordinate this relationship; they are not the center of it. Work should not be assigned haphazardly, but with the employee's skills and growth in mind. “An employee who understands why she has been asked to do something is far more likely to assume true ownership for the assignment,” Walker says (Yakowicz 2015 n.p.). A leader's agenda should be on employee success, not personal glory. Employees are more receptive when they recognize that their leader is working not for their own success, but for the employee's success.

A survey from HighGround revealed one important item that most new managers and even many seasoned managers overlook: asking for feedback. Everyone has room for growth, even managers. Traditional management dictates a top-down style in which managers review subordinates. But many companies have found it beneficial to turn things around and ask employees, “How can I be a better manager?” Of course, this upward review only works if employees believe that their opinion will be heard. Managers need to carefully cultivate a rapport where employees don't fear reprisals for negative feedback. Listening to criticism from those you are leading builds trust and helps ensure that as a manager, you are providing the sort of leadership that employees need to be successful (Kauflin 2017). Showing respect and caring for employees by asking this simple question is inspiring—an important aspect of leadership itself. Whether asking for feedback or focusing on an employee's fit with a particular job description, a leader helps guide employees through the day-to-day, builds a positive culture, and helps employees improve their skills.

Questions
1. What do you think are the most important qualities in a leader? In a manager? Are your two lists mutually exclusive? Why?
2. How do you think a leader can use feedback to model the growth process for employees?

CONCEPT CHECK

1. Identify and describe substitutes of leadership.

Transformational, Visionary, and Charismatic Leadership

1. What are the characteristics of transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership?

Many organizations struggling with the need to manage chaos, to undergo a culture change, to empower organizational members, and to restructure have looked for answers in “hiring the right leader.” Many have come to believe that the transformational, visionary, and charismatic leader represents the style of leadership needed to move organizations through chaos.

The Transformational and Visionary Leader

Leaders who subscribe to the notion that “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” are often described as transactional leaders. They are extremely task oriented and instrumental in their approach, frequently looking for incentives that will induce their followers into a desired course of action. These reciprocal exchanges take place in the context of a mutually interdependent relationship between the leader and the follower, frequently resulting in interpersonal bonding. The transactional leader moves a group toward task accomplishment by initiating structure and by offering an incentive in exchange for desired behaviors. The transformational leader, on the other hand, moves and changes (fixes) things “in a big way!” Unlike transactional leaders, they don’t cause change by offering inducements. Instead, they inspire others to action through their personal values, vision, passion, and belief in and commitment to the mission. Through charisma (idealized influence), individualized consideration (a focus on the development of the follower), intellectual stimulation (questioning assumptions and challenging the status quo), and/or inspirational motivation (articulating an appealing vision), transformational leaders move others to follow.

The transformational leader is also referred to as a visionary leader. Visionary leaders are those who influence others through an emotional and/or intellectual attraction to the leader’s dreams of what “can be.” Vision links a present and future state, energizes and generates commitment, provides meaning for action, and serves as a standard against which to assess performance. Evidence indicates that vision is positively related to follower attitudes and performance. As pointed out by Warren Bennis, a vision is effective only to the extent that the leader can communicate it in such a way that others come to internalize it as their own.

As people, transformational leaders are engaging. They are characterized by extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience. They energize others. They increase followers’ awareness of the importance of the designated outcome. They motivate individuals to transcend their own self-interest for the benefit of the team and inspire organizational members to self-manage (become self-leaders). Transformational leaders move people to focus on higher-order needs (self-esteem and self-actualization). When organizations face a turbulent environment, intense competition, products that may die early, and the need to move fast, managers cannot rely solely on organizational structure to guide organizational activity. In these situations, transformational leadership can motivate
followers to be fully engaged and inspired, to internalize the goals and values of the organization, and to move forward with dogged determination!

Transformational leadership is positively related to follower satisfaction, performance, and acts of citizenship. These effects result from the fact that transformational leader behaviors elicit trust and perceptions of procedural justice, which in turn favorably impact follower satisfaction and performance. As R. Pillai, C. Schriesheim, and E. Williams note, “when followers perceive that they can influence the outcomes of decisions that are important to them and that they are participants in an equitable relationship with their leader, their perceptions of procedural justice [and trust] are likely to be enhanced.” Trust and experiences of organizational justice promote leader effectiveness, follower satisfaction, motivation, performance, and citizenship behaviors.

Charismatic Leadership

Ronald Reagan, Jesse Jackson, and Queen Elizabeth I have something in common with Martin Luther King Jr., Indira Gandhi, and Winston Churchill. The effectiveness of these leaders originates in part in their charisma, a special magnetic charm and appeal that arouses loyalty and enthusiasm. Each exerted considerable personal influence to bring about major events.

It is difficult to differentiate the charismatic and the transformational leader. True transformational leaders may achieve their results through the magnetism of their personality. In this case, the two types of leaders are essentially one and the same, yet it is important to note that not all transformational leaders have a personal “aura.”

Sociologist Max Weber evidenced an interest in charismatic leadership in the 1920s, calling charismatic leaders people who possess legitimate power that arises from “exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character.” Charismatic leaders “single-handedly” effect changes even in very large organizations. Their personality is a powerful force, and the relationship that they forge with their followers is extremely strong.

The charismatic leadership phenomenon involves a complex interplay between the attributes of the leader and followers’ needs, values, beliefs, and perceptions. At its extreme, leader-follower relationships are characterized by followers’ unquestioning acceptance; trust in the leader’s beliefs; affection; willing obedience, emulation of, and identification with the leader; emotional involvement with his mission; and feelings of self-efficacy directed toward the leader’s mission. This can work to better the welfare of individuals, such as when Lee Iacocca saved thousands of jobs through his dramatic turnaround of a failing corporate giant, the Chrysler Corporation. It also can be disastrous, as when David Koresh led dozens and dozens of men, women, and children to their fiery death in Waco, Texas. Individuals working for charismatic leaders often have higher task performance, greater task satisfaction, and lower levels of role conflict than those working for leaders with considerate or structuring behaviors. What are the characteristics of these people who can exert such a strong influence over their followers? Charismatic leaders have a strong need for power and the tendency to rely heavily on referent power as their primary power base. Charismatic leaders also are extremely self-confident and convinced of the rightness of their own beliefs and ideals. This self-confidence and strength of conviction make people trust the charismatic leader’s judgment, unconditionally following the leader’s mission and directives for
The result is a strong bond between leader and followers, a bond built primarily around the leader's personality. Although there have been many effective charismatic leaders, those who succeed the most have coupled their charismatic capabilities with behaviors consistent with the same leadership principles followed by other effective leaders. Those who do not add these other dimensions still attract followers but do not meet organizational goals as effectively as they could. They are (at least for a time) the pied pipers of the business world, with lots of followers but no constructive direction.

**ETHICS IN PRACTICE**

**Uber's Need for an Ethical Leader**

Almost since its initial founding in 2009 as a luxury car service for the San Francisco area, controversy has followed Uber. Many complaints are against the tactics employed by the company’s founder and former CEO, Travis Kalanick, but the effects are found throughout the business and its operations.

In 2009, UberBlack was a “black car” service, a high-end driving service that cost more than a taxi but less than hiring a private driver for the night. It wasn’t until 2012 that the company launched UberX, the taxi-esque service most people think of today when they say “Uber.” The UberX service contracted with private drivers who provided rides in their personal vehicles. A customer would use Uber’s smartphone app to request the ride, and a private driver would show up. Originally launched in San Francisco, the service spread quickly, and by 2017, Uber was in 633 cities. The service was hailed by many as innovative and the free market’s answer to high-priced and sometimes unreliable taxi services. But Uber has not been without its critics, both inside and outside of the company.

In 2013, as the UberX service spread, some UberBlack drivers protested at the company’s headquarters complaining about poor company benefits and pay. They also claimed that competition from the newly launched UberX service was cutting into their sales and undermining job security. Kalanick rebuffed the protests, basically calling the complaints sour grapes: most of the protestors had been laid off earlier for poor service (Lawler 2013). Controversy also arose over the use of contract drivers rather than full-time employees. Contractors complained about a lack of benefits and low wages. Competitors, especially taxi services, complained that they were being unfairly undercut because Uber didn’t have to abide by the same screening process and costs that traditional yellow taxi companies did. Some municipalities agreed, arguing further than Uber’s lack of or insufficient screening of drivers put passengers at risk.

Uber quickly generated a reputation as a bully and Kalanick as an unethical leader (Ann 2016). The company has been accused of covering up cases of sexual assault, and Kalanick himself has been quoted as calling the service “Boob-er,” a reference to using the service to pick up women (Ann 2016). Uber has been criticized for its recruiting practices; in particular, it has been accused of bribing drivers working for competitors to switch over and drive for Uber (Ann 2016). The company was also caught making false driver requests for competing companies and then canceling the order. The effect was to waste the other driver’s time and make it more difficult for customers to secure rides on the competing service (D’Orazio 2014). Susan J. Fowler, former site reliability engineer at Uber, went public with cases of outright sexual harassment within Uber (Fowler 2017). Former employees described Uber’s corporate culture as an “a**hole culture” and a “Hobbesian jungle’ where you can never get ahead unless someone else dies.” (Wong 2017) One employee described a leadership that
encouraged a company practice of developing incomplete solutions for the purpose of beating the competitor to market. Fowler went so far as to compare the experience to Game of Thrones, and other former employees even consider “making it” at Uber a black mark on a resume (Wong 2017).

In terms of social acrimony and PR disasters, arguably caused or even encouraged by leadership, Uber's rise to notoriety has arguably been more bad than good. In June 2017, Kalanick made one too many headlines and agreed to step down as the company's CEO.

Questions

1. In the summer of 2017, Transport of London (TfL) began proceedings to revoke Uber’s permit to operate in London. How do you think Uber's poor corporate reputation may have been a factor in TfL's thinking?

2. What steps do you think Uber's new CEO, Dara Khosrowshahi, needs to take to repair Uber's reputation?


CONCEPT CHECK

1. What are the defining characteristics of transformational and charismatic leaders?

Leadership Needs in the 21st Century

1. How do different approaches and styles of leadership impact what is needed now?

Frequent headlines in popular business magazines like Fortune and Business Week call our attention to a major movement going on in the world of business. Organizations are being reengineered and restructured, and network, virtual, and modular corporations are emerging. People talk about the transnational organization, the boundaryless company, the post-hierarchical organization. By the end of the decade, the organizations that we will be living in, working with, and competing against are likely to be vastly different from what we know today.

The transition will not be easy; uncertainty tends to breed resistance. We are driven by linear and rational thinking, which leads us to believe that “we can get there from here” by making some incremental changes in who we are and what we are currently doing. Existing paradigms frame our perceptions and guide our thinking. Throwing away paradigms that have served us well in the past does not come easily.

A look back tells most observers that the past decade has been characterized by rapid change, intense competition, an explosion of new technologies, chaos, turbulence, and high levels of uncertainty. A quick scan of today's business landscape suggests that this trend is not going away anytime soon. According to Professor Jay A. Conger from Canada's McGill University, “In times of great transition, leadership becomes critically important. Leaders, in essence, offer us a
The magnitude of today's changes will demand not only more leadership, but newer forms of leadership. According to Conger, two major forces are defining for us the genius of the next generation of leaders. The first force is the organization's external environment. Global competitiveness is creating some unique leadership demands. The second force is the growing diversity in organizations' internal environments. Diversity will significantly change the relationship between organizational members, work, and the organization in challenging, difficult, and also very positive ways.

What will the leaders of tomorrow be like? Professor Conger suggests that the effective leaders of the 21st century will have to be many things. They will have to be strategic opportunists; only organizational visionaries will find strategic opportunities before competitors. They will have to be globally aware; with 80 percent of today's organizations facing significant foreign competition, knowledge of foreign markets, global economics, and geopolitics is crucial. They will have to be capable of managing a highly decentralized organization; movement toward the high-involvement organization will accelerate as the environmental demands for organizational speed, flexibility, learning, and leanness increase. They will have be sensitive to diversity; during the first few years of the 21st century, fewer than 10 percent of those entering the workforce in North America will be white, Anglo-Saxon males, and the incoming women, minorities, and immigrants will bring with them a very different set of needs and concerns. They will have to be interpersonally competent; a highly diverse workforce will necessitate a leader who is extremely aware of and sensitive to multicultural expectations and needs. They will have to be builders of an organizational community; work and organizations will serve as a major source of need fulfillment, and in the process leaders will be called on to help build this community in such a way that organizational members develop a sense of ownership for the organization and its mission.

Finally, it is important to note that leadership theory construction and empirical inquiry are an ongoing endeavor. While the study of traits, behavior, and contingency models of leadership provide us with a great deal of insight into leadership, the mosaic is far from complete. During the past 15 years, several new theories of leadership have emerged; among them are leader-member exchange theory, implicit leadership theory, neocharismatic theory, value-based theory of leadership, and visionary leadership, each of which over time will add to our bank of knowledge about leaders and the leadership process.

Leaders of the 21st-century organization have a monumental challenge awaiting them and a wealth of self-enriching and fulfilling opportunities. The challenge and rewards awaiting effective leaders are awesome!

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. What is the role of leadership in the 21st century?

**Key Terms**

**leadership**

A social (interpersonal) influence relationship between two or more persons who depend on each other to attain certain mutual goals in a group situation.

**designated leader**

The person placed in the leadership position by forces outside the group.

**emergent leader**

The person who becomes a group's leader by virtue of processes and dynamics internal to the group.

**formal leader**

That individual who is recognized by those outside the group as the official leader of the group.
informal leader
That individual whom members of the group acknowledge as their leader.

great man theory of leadership
The belief that some people are born to be leaders and others are not.

consideration
A “relationship-oriented” leader behavior that is supportive, friendly, and focused on personal needs and interpersonal relationships.

initiating structure
A “task-oriented” leader behavior that is focused on goal attainment, organizing and scheduling work, solving problems, and maintaining work processes.

contingency theory of leadership
A theory advanced by Dr. Fred E. Fiedler that suggests that different leadership styles are effective as a function of the favorableness of the leadership situation least preferred.

Least-preferred coworker (LPC)
The person with whom the leader least likes to work.

path-goal theory of leadership
A theory that posits that leadership is path- and goal-oriented, suggesting that different leadership styles are effective as a function of the task confronting the group.

charisma
A special personal magnetic charm or appeal that arouses loyalty and enthusiasm in a leader-follower relationship.

charismatic leader
A person who possesses legitimate power that arises from “exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character.”

transformational leader
A leader who moves and changes things “in a big way” by inspiring others to perform the extraordinary.

visionary leader
A leader who influences others through an emotional and/or intellectual attraction to the leader's dreams of what “can be.”

Summary of Learning Outcomes

13.1 The Nature of Leadership

1. What is the nature of leadership and the leadership process?

Leadership is a primary vehicle for fulfilling the directing function of management. Because of its importance, theorists, researchers, and practitioners have devoted a tremendous amount of attention and energy to unlocking the secrets of effective leadership. They have kept at this search for perhaps a greater period of time than for any other single issue related to management.

13.2 The Leadership Process

1. What are the processes associated with people coming to leadership positions?

Organizations typically have both formal and informal leaders. Their leadership is effective for virtually identical reasons. Leadership and management are not the same. Although effective leadership is a necessary part of effective
management, the overall management role is much larger than leadership alone. Managers plan, organize, direct, and control. As leaders, they are engaged primarily in the directing function.

**13.3 Leader Emergence**

1. How do leaders influence and move their followers to action?

There are many diverse perspectives on leadership. Some managers treat leadership primarily as an exercise of power. Others believe that a particular belief and attitude structure makes for effective leaders. Still others believe it is possible to identify a collection of leader traits that produces a leader who should be universally effective in any leadership situation. Even today, many believe that a profile of behaviors can universally guarantee successful leadership. Unfortunately, such simple solutions fall short of the reality.

**13.4 The Trait Approach to Leadership**

1. What are the trait perspectives on leadership?

**13.5 Behavioral Approaches to Leadership**

1. What are the behavioral perspectives on leadership?

It is clear that effective leaders are endowed with the “right stuff,” yet this “stuff” is only a precondition to effective leadership. Leaders need to connect with their followers and bring the right configuration of knowledge, skills, ability, vision, and strategy to the situational demands confronting the group.

**13.6 Situational (Contingency) Approaches to Leadership**

1. What are the situational perspectives on leadership?

We now know that there is no one best way to be an effective leader in all circumstances. Leaders need to recognize that how they choose to lead will affect the nature of their followers' compliance with their influence tactics, and ultimately impacts motivation, satisfaction, performance, and group effectiveness. In addition, the nature of the situation—contextual demands and characteristics of the follower—dictates the type of leadership that is likely to be effective. Fiedler focuses on leader traits and argues that the favorableness of the leadership situation dictates the type of leadership approach needed. He recommends selecting leaders to match the situation or changing the situation to match the leader. Path-goal theory focuses on leader behavior that can be adapted to the demands of a particular work environment and organizational members’ characteristics. Path-goal theorists believe both that leaders can be matched with the situation and that the situation can be changed to match leaders. Together, these theories make clear that leadership is effective when the characteristics and behavior of the leader match the demands of the situation.

**13.7 Substitutes for and Neutralizers of Leadership**

1. What does the concept of “substitute for leadership” mean?

Characteristics of followers, tasks, and organizations can substitute for or neutralize many leader behaviors. Leaders must remain aware of these factors, no matter which perspective on leadership they adopt. Such awareness allows managers to use substitutes for, and neutralizers of, leadership to their benefit, rather than be stymied by their presence.

**13.8 Transformational, Visionary, and Charismatic Leadership**

1. What are the characteristics of transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership?

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in key leader traits and behaviors. As organizations face increasing
amounts of chaos in their external environments, searches for “the right leader” who can bring about major organizational transformations has intensified. This search once again focuses our attention on a set of “key” motives, knowledge, skills, and personality attributes. Emerging from this search has been the identification of the charismatic and transformational leader.

13.9 Leadership Needs in the 21st Century

1. How do different approaches and styles of leadership impact what is needed now?

Leadership in the high-involvement organization differs dramatically from that in the traditional and control-oriented organization. Leaders external to the team have as one of their primary roles empowering group members and the teams themselves to self-lead and self-manage. Leaders internal to the team are peers; they work alongside and simultaneously facilitate planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and the execution of the team’s work.

Although we know a great deal about the determinants of effective leadership, we have much to learn. Each theory presented in this chapter is put into practice by managers every day. None provides the complete answer to what makes leaders effective, but each has something important to offer.

Finally, our understanding of leadership has many shortcomings and limitations. The existing literature is largely based on observations from a Western industrialized context. The extent to which our theories of leadership are bound by our culture, limiting generalization to other cultures, is largely unknown. Cross-cultural leadership research will no doubt intensify as the global economy becomes an ever more dominant force in the world.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Define leadership and distinguish between leadership and management.
2. Discuss the processes associated with people coming to positions of leadership.
3. Discuss the different forms of power available to leaders and the effects associated with each.
4. It has been observed that effective leaders have the “right stuff.” What traits are commonly associated with leader emergence and effective leaders?
5. Both the Ohio State University and University of Michigan leadership studies identified central leader behaviors. What are these behaviors, and how are they different from one another?
6. Blake and Mouton’s work with the Leadership Grid® identified several leadership types. What are they, and how does this leadership model look from the perspective of situation theories of leadership?
7. Identify and describe the three situational variables presented in Fiedler’s contingency theory of leadership.
8. What are the four leadership behaviors in the path-goal theory of leadership?
9. Discuss the differences between the internal and external leadership roles surrounding self-managed work teams.
10. What are substitutes for leadership? What are neutralizers? Give an example of each.
11. What are the distinguishing features of the transformational and the charismatic leader

Group Skills Application Exercises

1. Identify a charismatic leader and a leader with little charisma. What are the traits and skills that allow them to succeed in their roles? How can you incorporate the traits that allow them to be successful in their roles into the skills you will need to have in a leadership position?
2. You have just taken a leadership position where 40 percent of the workforce telecommutes. You want to encourage teamwork and want to ensure that telecommuting is not hurting teamwork. What is your plan to discover how things are working and how to communicate your desire to have effective teamwork?
3. You are at a meeting, and during the meeting someone on the team addresses their manager and points out a crucial mistake that could doom the project. The person says that their manager should have caught it and because of that should resign. As a leader of the group, how would you deal with the subordinate, the manager, and communication with the entire team?
18. Conformity and Obedience

From the Noba Project By Jerry M. Burger Santa Clara University

We often change our attitudes and behaviors to match the attitudes and behaviors of the people around us. One reason for this conformity is a concern about what other people think of us. This process was demonstrated in a classic study in which college students deliberately gave wrong answers to a simple visual judgment task rather than go against the group. Another reason we conform to the norm is because other people often have information we do not, and relying on norms can be a reasonable strategy when we are uncertain about how we are supposed to act. Unfortunately, we frequently misperceive how the typical person acts, which can contribute to problems such as the excessive binge drinking often seen in college students. Obeying orders from an authority figure can sometimes lead to disturbing behavior. This danger was illustrated in a famous study in which participants were instructed to administer painful electric shocks to another person in what they believed to be a learning experiment. Despite vehement protests from the person receiving the shocks, most participants continued the procedure when instructed to do so by the experimenter. The findings raise questions about the power of blind obedience in deplorable situations such as atrocities and genocide. They also raise concerns about the ethical treatment of participants in psychology experiments.

Key Terms

- Conformity
- Descriptive norms
- Obedience
- Social norms

Learning Objectives

- Become aware of how widespread conformity is in our lives and some of the ways each of us changes our attitudes and behavior to match the norm.
- Understand the two primary reasons why people often conform to perceived norms.
- Appreciate how obedience to authority has been examined in laboratory studies and some of the implications of the findings from these investigations.
- Consider some of the remaining issues and sources of controversy surrounding Milgram's obedience studies.

Introduction

When he was a teenager, my son often enjoyed looking at photographs of me and my wife taken when we were in high school. He laughed at the hairstyles, the clothing, and the kind of glasses people wore “back then.” And when he
was through with his ridiculing, we would point out that no one is immune to fashions and fads and that someday his children will probably be equally amused by his high school photographs and the trends he found so normal at the time.

Everyday observation confirms that we often adopt the actions and attitudes of the people around us. Trends in clothing, music, foods, and entertainment are obvious. But our views on political issues, religious questions, and lifestyles also reflect to some degree the attitudes of the people we interact with. Similarly, decisions about behaviors such as smoking and drinking are influenced by whether the people we spend time with engage in these activities. Psychologists refer to this widespread tendency to act and think like the people around us as **conformity**.

![Fashion trends serve as good, and sometimes embarrassing, examples of our own susceptibility to conformity.](https://goo.gl/0roq35, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, https://goo.gl/Toc0ZF)

**Conformity**

Humans may possess an inherent tendency to imitate the actions of others. Even if people are unaware of it, many will mimic the gestures, body posture, language, speech rate, and other behaviors of the people we interact with. Researchers find that this mimicking increases the connection between people and allows our interactions to flow more smoothly (*Chartrand & Bargh, 1999*).

Beyond this automatic tendency to imitate others, psychologists have identified two primary reasons for conformity. The first of these is **normative influence**. When normative influence is operating, people go along with the crowd because they are concerned about what others think of them. We don't want to look out of step or become the target of criticism just because we like different kinds of music or dress differently than everyone else. Fitting in also brings rewards such as camaraderie and compliments.
How powerful is normative influence? Consider a classic study conducted many years ago by Solomon Asch (1956). The participants were male college students who were asked to engage in a seemingly simple task. An experimenter standing several feet away held up a card that depicted one line on the left side and three lines on the right side. The participant’s job was to say aloud which of the three lines on the right was the same length as the line on the left. Sixteen cards were presented one at a time, and the correct answer on each was so obvious as to make the task a little boring. Except for one thing. The participant was not alone. In fact, there were six other people in the room who also gave their answers to the line-judgment task aloud. Moreover, although they pretended to be fellow participants, these other individuals were, in fact, confederates working with the experimenter. The real participant was seated so that he always gave his answer after hearing what five other “participants” said. Everything went smoothly until the third trial, when inexplicably the first “participant” gave an obviously incorrect answer. The mistake might have been amusing, except the second participant gave the same answer. As did the third, the fourth, and the fifth participant. Suddenly the real participant was in a difficult situation. His eyes told him one thing, but five out of five people apparently saw something else.

It’s one thing to wear your hair a certain way or like certain foods because everyone around you does. But, would participants intentionally give a wrong answer just to conform with the other participants? The confederates uniformly gave incorrect answers on 12 of the 16 trials, and 76 percent of the participants went along with the norm at least once and also gave the wrong answer. In total, they conformed with the group on one-third of the 12 test trials. Although we might be impressed that the majority of the time participants answered honestly, most psychologists find it remarkable that so many college students caved in to the pressure of the group rather than do the job they had volunteered to do. In almost all cases, the participants knew they were giving an incorrect answer, but their concern for what these other people might be thinking about them overpowered their desire to do the right thing.

Variations of Asch’s procedures have been conducted numerous times (Bond, 2005; Bond & Smith, 1996). We now know that the findings are easily replicated, that there is an increase in conformity with more confederates (up to about five), that teenagers are more prone to conforming than are adults, and that people conform significantly less often when they believe the confederates will not hear their responses (Berndt, 1979; Bond, 2005; Crutchfield, 1955; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). This last finding is consistent with the notion that participants change their answers because they are concerned about what others think of them.

The other reason we sometimes go along with the crowd is that people are often a source of information. Psychologists refer to this process as informational influence. Most of us, most of the time, are motivated to do the right thing. If society deems that we put litter in a proper container, speak softly in libraries, and tip our waiter, then that’s what most of us will do. But sometimes it’s not clear what society expects of us. In these situations, we often rely on descriptive norms (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). That is, we act the way most people—or most people like us—act. This is not an unreasonable strategy. Other people often have information that we do not, especially when we find ourselves in new situations. If you have ever been part of a conversation that went something like this,

“Do you think we should?”
“Sure. Everyone else is doing it.”
you have experienced the power of informational influence.

However, it’s not always easy to obtain good descriptive norm information, which means we sometimes rely on a flawed notion of the norm when deciding how we should behave. A good example of how misperceived norms can lead to problems is found in research on binge drinking among college students. Excessive drinking is a serious problem on many campuses (Mita, 2009). There are many reasons why students binge drink, but one of the most important is their perception of the descriptive norm. How much students drink is highly correlated with how much they believe the average student drinks (Neighbors, Lee, Lewis, Fossos, & Larimer, 2007). Unfortunately, students aren’t very good at making this assessment. They notice the boisterous heavy drinker at the party but fail to consider all the students not attending the party. As a result, students typically overestimate the descriptive norm for college student drinking (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Perkins, Haines, & Rice, 2005). Most students believe they consume significantly less alcohol than the norm, a miscalculation that creates a dangerous push toward more and more excessive alcohol consumption. On the positive side, providing students with accurate information about drinking norms has been found to reduce overindulgent drinking (Burger, LaSalvia, Hendricks, Mehdipour, & Neudeck, 2011; Neighbors, Lee, Lewis, Fossos, & Walter, 2009).

Researchers have demonstrated the power of descriptive norms in a number of areas. Homeowners reduced the amount of energy they used when they learned that they were consuming more energy than their neighbors (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). Undergraduates selected the healthy food option when led to believe that other students had made this choice (Burger et al., 2010). Hotel guests were more likely to reuse their towels when a hanger in the bathroom told them that this is what most guests did (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008). And more people began using the stairs instead of the elevator when informed that the vast majority of people took the stairs to go up one or two floors (Burger & Shelton, 2011).

**Obedience**

Sometimes decisions about how to act are not so easy. Sometimes we are directed by a more powerful person to do things we may not want to do. Researchers who study obedience are interested in how people react when given an order or command from someone in a position of authority. In many situations, obedience is a good thing. We are taught at an early age to obey parents, teachers, and police officers. It’s also important to follow instructions from judges, firefighters, and lifeguards. And a military would fail to function if soldiers stopped obeying orders from superiors. But, there is also a dark side to obedience. In the name of “following orders” or “just doing my job,” people can violate ethical principles and break laws. More disturbingly, obedience often is at the heart of some of the worst of human behavior—massacres, atrocities, and even genocide.

It was this unsettling side of obedience that led to some of the most famous and most controversial research in the history of psychology. Stanley Milgram (1963, 1965, 1974) wanted to know why many German citizens went along with the brutality of the Nazi leaders during the Holocaust. Milgram (1963) wrote, “these inhumane policies may have originated in the mind of a single person...but they could only be carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of persons obeyed orders” (p. 371).

To understand this obedience, Milgram conducted a series of laboratory investigations. In all but one variation of the basic procedure, participants were men recruited from the community surrounding Yale University, where the research was carried out. These citizens signed up for what they believed to be an experiment on learning and memory. In particular, they were told the research concerned the effects of punishment on learning. Three people were involved in
each session. One was the participant. Another was the experimenter. The third was a confederate who pretended to be another participant.

The experimenter explained that the study consisted of a memory test and that one of the men would be the teacher and the other the learner. Through a rigged drawing, the real participant was always assigned the teacher's role and the confederate was always the learner. The teacher watched as the learner was strapped into a chair and had electrodes attached to his wrist. The teacher then moved to the room next door where he was seated in front of a large metal box the experimenter identified as a “shock generator.” The front of the box displayed gauges and lights and, most noteworthy, a series of 30 levers across the bottom. Each lever was labeled with a voltage figure, starting with 15 volts and moving up in 15-volt increments to 450 volts. Labels also indicated the strength of the shocks, starting with “Slight Shock” and moving up to “Danger: Severe Shock” toward the end. The last two levers were simply labeled “XXX” in red.

The teacher administered a memory test to the learner in the next room through a microphone. The learner responded to the multiple-choice items by pressing one of four buttons that were barely within reach of his strapped-down hand. If the teacher saw the correct answer light up on his side of the wall, he simply moved on to the next item. But if the learner got the item wrong, the teacher pressed one of the shock levers and, thereby, delivered the learner's punishment. The teacher was instructed to start with the 15-volt lever and move up to the next highest shock for each successive wrong answer.

In reality, the learner received no shocks. Mistakes were made intentionally, and the teacher was to administer what he believed to be increasingly strong shocks. The purpose of the study was to see how far the teacher would go before refusing to continue. The teacher's first hint that something was amiss came after pressing the 75-volt lever and hearing through the wall the learner say “Ugh!” The learner's reactions became stronger and louder with each lever press. At 150 volts, the learner yelled out, “Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart's starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart's starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out.”
The experimenter's role was to encourage the participant to continue. If at any time the teacher asked to end the session, the experimenter responded with phrases such as, “The experiment requires that you continue,” and “You have no other choice, you must go on.” The experimenter ended the session only after the teacher stated four successive times that he did not want to continue. All the while, the learner’s protests became more intense with each shock. After 300 volts, the learner refused to answer any more questions, which led the experimenter to say that no answer should be considered a wrong answer. After 330 volts, despite vehement protests from the learner following previous shocks, the teacher heard only silence, suggesting that the learner was now physically unable to respond. If the teacher reached 450 volts—the end of the generator—the experimenter told him to continue pressing the 450 volt lever for each wrong answer. It was only after the teacher pressed the 450-volt lever three times that the experimenter announced that the study was over.

If you had been a participant in this research, what would you have done? Virtually everyone says he or she would have stopped early in the process. And most people predict that very few if any participants would keep pressing all the way to 450 volts. Yet in the basic procedure described here, 65 percent of the participants continued to administer shocks to the very end of the session. These were not brutal, sadistic men. They were ordinary citizens who nonetheless followed the experimenter’s instructions to administer what they believed to be excruciating if not dangerous electric shocks to an innocent person. The disturbing implication from the findings is that, under the right circumstances, each of us may be capable of acting in some very uncharacteristic and perhaps very unsettling ways.

Milgram conducted many variations of this basic procedure to explore some of the factors that affect obedience. He found that obedience rates decreased when the learner was in the same room as the experimenter and declined even further when the teacher had to physically touch the learner to administer the punishment. Participants also were less willing to continue the procedure after seeing other teachers refuse to press the shock levers, and they were significantly less obedient when the instructions to continue came from a person they believed to be another participant rather than from the experimenter. Finally, Milgram found that women participants followed the experimenter’s instructions at exactly the same rate the men had.

Milgram’s obedience research has been the subject of much controversy and discussion. Psychologists continue to debate the extent to which Milgram’s studies tell us something about atrocities in general and about the behavior of German citizens during the Holocaust in particular (Miller, 2004). Certainly, there are important features of that time and place that cannot be recreated in a laboratory, such as a pervasive climate of prejudice and dehumanization. Another issue concerns the relevance of the findings. Some people have argued that today we are more aware of the dangers of blind obedience than we were when the research was conducted back in the 1960s. However, findings from partial and modified replications of Milgram’s procedures conducted in recent years suggest that people respond to the situation today much like they did a half a century ago (Burger, 2009).
Another point of controversy concerns the ethical treatment of research participants. Researchers have an obligation to look out for the welfare of their participants. Yet, there is little doubt that many of Milgram’s participants experienced intense levels of stress as they went through the procedure. In his defense, Milgram was not unconcerned about the effects of the experience on his participants. And in follow-up questionnaires, the vast majority of his participants said they were pleased they had been part of the research and thought similar experiments should be conducted in the future. Nonetheless, in part because of Milgram’s studies, guidelines and procedures were developed to protect research participants from these kinds of experiences. Although Milgram’s intriguing findings left us with many unanswered questions, conducting a full replication of his experiment remains out of bounds by today’s standards.

Social psychologists are fond of saying that we are all influenced by the people around us more than we recognize. Of course, each person is unique, and ultimately each of us makes choices about how we will and will not act. But decades of research on conformity and obedience make it clear that we live in a social world and that—for better or worse—much of what we do is a reflection of the people we encounter.

Take a Quiz

An optional quiz is available for this chapter at https://nobaproject.com/modules/conformity-and-obedience
Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you see normative influence operating among you and your peers? How difficult would it be to go against the norm? What would it take for you to not do something just because all your friends were doing it?
2. What are some examples of how informational influence helps us do the right thing? How can we use descriptive norm information to change problem behaviors?
3. Is conformity more likely or less likely to occur when interacting with other people through social media as compared to face-to-face encounters?
4. When is obedience to authority a good thing and when is it bad? What can be done to prevent people from obeying commands to engage in truly deplorable behavior such as atrocities and massacres?
5. In what ways do Milgram's experimental procedures fall outside the guidelines for research with human participants? Are there ways to conduct relevant research on obedience to authority without violating these guidelines?

Vocabulary

Conformity
Changing one's attitude or behavior to match a perceived social norm.

Descriptive norm
The perception of what most people do in a given situation.

Informational influence
Conformity that results from a concern to act in a socially approved manner as determined by how others act.

Normative influence
Conformity that results from a concern for what other people think of us.

Obedience
Responding to an order or command from a person in a position of authority.

Outside Resources

Student Video: Christine N. Winston and Hemali Maher’s ‘The Milgram Experiment’ gives an excellent 3-minute overview of one of the most famous experiments in the history of psychology. It was one of the winning entries in the 2015 Noba Student Video Award.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=uVIUZwkM_G0

Video: An example of information influence in a field setting

https://youtube.com/watch?v=4yFea6oWk%3Fcolor%3Dred%26modestbranding%3D1%26showinfo%3D0%26origin%3Dhttps%3A
Video: Scenes from a recent partial replication of Milgram's obedience studies
https://youtube.com/watch?v=HwqNP9HRy7Y&color=red&modestbranding=1&showinfo=0&origin=https://youtube.com

Video: Scenes from a recent replication of Asch's conformity experiment
https://youtube.com/watch?v=VgDx5g9ql1g&color=red&modestbranding=1&showinfo=0&origin=https://youtube.com

Web: Website devoted to scholarship and research related to Milgram's obedience studies
http://www.stanleymilgram.com

References


Authors

Jerry M. Burger is a Professor of Psychology at Santa Clara University. His primary research interests are in the area of social influence, especially processes related to obedience, compliance and social norms. His books include *Desire for control: Personality, social and clinical perspectives*, *Returning home: Reconnecting with our childhood and Personality*, a textbook now in its ninth edition.

Media Attributions

• Most-brilliant-social-psychology-experiments_4

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19. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

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Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. It describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis.[1]

Hofstede developed his original model as a result of using factor analysis to examine the results of a worldwide survey of over 100,000 employee values by IBM between 1967 and 1973. It has been refined since. The original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed: individualism–collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance (strength of social hierarchy) and masculinity-femininity (task-orientation versus person-orientation). Independent research in Hong Kong led Hofstede to add a fifth dimension, long-term orientation (i.e., long versus short term orientation) to cover aspects of values not discussed in the original paradigm. In 2010, Hofstede and colleagues added a sixth dimension, indulgence versus self-restraint.

Hofstede's work established a major research tradition in cross-cultural psychology and has also been drawn upon by researchers and consultants in fields of international business and communication. The theory has been widely used in several fields as a paradigm—an accepted model or pattern for conducting research (see Kuhn, 1970, 2012)[30]. It continues to be a major resource in cross-cultural fields. It has inspired a number of other major cross-cultural studies of values, as well as research on other aspects of culture, such as social beliefs (Schwartz, 1992; Triandis & Gelfand, 1995; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1993).
Dimensions of national cultures

- **Power distance index (PDI):** The power distance index is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.” In this dimension, inequality and power is perceived from the followers, or the lower strata. A higher degree of the Index indicates that hierarchy is clearly established and executed in society, without doubt or reason. A lower degree of the Index signifies that people question authority and attempt to distribute power.[6]

- **Individualism vs. collectivism (IDV):** This index explores the “degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups.” Individualistic societies have loose ties that often only relate an individual to his/her immediate family. They emphasize the “I” versus the “we.” Its counterpart, collectivism, describes a society in which tightly-integrated relationships tie extended families and others into in-groups. These in-groups are laced with undoubted loyalty and support each other when a conflict arises with another in-group. Conversely, individualistic culture do not perceive the same rifts separating in-group and out-group members; that is, in-group members are not as close and out-group members are not as distant in individualistic cultures compared with collectivist cultures (Lustig, Koester, & Halualani, 2018).

- **Uncertainty avoidance (UAI):** The uncertainty avoidance index is defined as “a society's tolerance for ambiguity,” in which people embrace or avert an event of something unexpected, unknown, or away from the status quo. Societies that score a high degree in this index opt for stiff codes of behavior, guidelines, laws, and generally rely on absolute truth, or the belief that one lone truth dictates everything and people know what it is. A lower degree in this index shows more acceptance of differing thoughts or ideas. Society tends to impose fewer regulations, ambiguity is more accustomed to, and the environment is more free-flowing.[6][7]

- **Masculinity vs. femininity (MAS):** In this dimension, masculinity is defined as “a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.” Its counterpart represents “a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.” Women in the respective societies tend to display different values. In feminine societies, they share modest and caring views equally with men. In more masculine societies, women are somewhat assertive and competitive, but notably less than men. In other words, they still recognize a gap between male and female values. This dimension is frequently viewed as taboo in highly masculine societies.

- **Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation (LTO):** This dimension associates the connection of the past with the current and future actions/challenges. A lower degree of this index (short-term) indicates that traditions are honored and kept, while steadfastness is valued. Societies with a high degree in this index (long-term) view adaptation and circumstantial, pragmatic problem-solving as a necessity. A poor country that is short-term oriented usually has little to no economic development, while long-term oriented countries continue to develop to a point.[6][7]

- **Indulgence vs. restraint (IND):** This dimension refers to the degree of freedom that societal norms give to citizens in fulfilling their human desires. Indulgence is defined as “a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun.” Its counterpart is defined as “a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.”[6][7]

Differences between cultures on the values dimensions

Putting together national scores (from 1 for the lowest to 100 for the highest), Hofstede's six-dimensions model allows international comparison between cultures, also called comparative research.[9]

- Power distance index shows very high scores for Latin and Asian countries, African areas and the Arab world. On
the other hand, Anglo and Germanic countries have a lower power distance (only 11 for Austria and 18 for Denmark).

For example, the United States has a 40 on the cultural scale of Hofstede's analysis. Compared to Guatemala where the power distance is very high (95) and Israel where it is very low (13), the United States is in the middle.

- Germany scores a high UAI (65) and Belgium even more (94) compared to Sweden (29) or Denmark (23) despite their geographic proximity. However, few countries have very low UAI.
- Masculinity is extremely low in Nordic countries: Norway scores 8 and Sweden only 5. In contrast, Masculinity is very high in Japan (95), and in European countries like Hungary, Austria and Switzerland influenced by German culture. In the Anglo world, masculinity scores are relatively high with 66 for the United Kingdom for example. Latin countries present contrasting scores: for example Venezuela has a 73-point score whereas Chile's is only 28.
- High long-term orientation scores are typically found in East Asia, with China having 118, Hong Kong 96 and Japan 88. They are moderate in Eastern and Western Europe, and low in the Anglo countries, Africa and in Latin America. However, there is less data about this dimension.
- There is even less data about the sixth dimension. Indulgence scores are highest in Latin America, parts of Africa, the Anglo world and Nordic Europe; restraint is mostly found in East Asia and Eastern Europe

Applications of the model

Importance of cultural-awareness and awareness-of-difference

“Culture is at times at the interface of a source of conflict, but it is increasingly synergistic in our current and future social contract. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best, sometimes a disaster, but always present like the air we breathe.”

Despite the evidence that groups are different from each other, humans tend to believe that deep inside all people are the same. In fact, as we are generally not aware of other countries’ cultures [citation needed] we tend to minimize our view of cultural differences. This leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between people from different countries.

Geert Hofstede shed light on these differences. The tool can be used to give a general overview and an approximate understanding of other cultures, what to expect from them and how to behave towards groups from other countries.

Practical applications of theory

International communication

In business it is commonly agreed that communication is one of the primary concerns (DiSanza & Legge, 2017). So, for professionals who work internationally; people who interact daily with other people from different countries within their company or with other companies abroad; Hofstede's model gives insights into other cultures. In fact, cross-cultural communication requires being aware of cultural differences because what may be considered perfectly acceptable and natural in one country, can be confusing or even offensive in another. All the levels in communication are affected by cultural dimensions: verbals (words and language itself), nonverbals (body language, gestures) and etiquette do's and don'ts (clothing, gift-giving, dining, customs and protocol). This is also valid for written
communication, as explained in William Wardrobe's essay “Beyond Hofstede: Cultural applications for communication with Latin American Businesses”.[16]

**International management**

These considerations are also true in international management and cross-cultural leadership. Decisions taken have to be based on the country's customs and values.[18]

When working in international companies, managers may provide training to their employees to make them sensitive to cultural differences, develop nuanced business practices, with protocols across countries. Hofstede's dimensions offer guidelines for defining culturally acceptable approaches to corporate organizations.

**Limitations of Hofstede’s model**

Even though Hofstede’s model is generally accepted as the most comprehensive framework of national cultures values by those studying business culture, its validity and its limitations have been extensively criticized.

The most cited critique is McSweeney. Hofstede replied to that critique and McSweeney responded. Also Ailon deconstructed Hofstede’s book Culture’s Consequences by mirroring it against its own assumptions and logic. Ailon finds inconsistencies at the level of both theory and methodology and cautions against an uncritical reading of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Hofstede replied to that critique and Ailon responded.

**References**

3. ^ Jump up to: Geert Hofstede's academic website
6. ^ Jump up to: HOFSTEDE, GEERT. “DIMENSIONALIZING CULTURES: THE HOFSTEDE MODEL IN CONTEXT”. SCHOLARWORKS@GVSU. ONLINE READINGS IN PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE. RETRIEVED 6 SEPTEMBER 2015.
8. ^ https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=orpc
9. ^ Hofstede's cultural dimensions (with world maps of dimensional values) [better source needed]
11. ^ Predominant is here defined as over 50% of the country's population identifying as a member of that religion
13. ^ Jump up to: What are the practical applications for Geert Hofstede's research on cultural differences?


17. ^ negotiation styles, Michelle LeBaron, July 2003 Archived 13 April 2011 at the Wayback Machine


29. ^ Tilburg University [not in citation given]


Further reading


External links[edit source]

• Geert Hofstede's academic website
• The impact of Dr. Hofstede's work on business practices
• Work paper on cultural differences in an international business context
• Hofstede's cultural factors
• The Hofstede Centre
• A test of the validity of Hofstede's cultural dimensions
• Video YouTube video of Geert Hofstede's Individualism and Collectivism
• Video YouTube video of his other dimensions of culture
• Video Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions visualized on a world map
• Video Geert Hofstede – Recent Discoveries about Cultural Differences
• Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context
• Geert Hofstede's Organizational Culture Dimensions
• Geert Hofstede's: Cultural Value Dimensions
• Hofstede Insights
• Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions
• The 6-D model of national culture

Categories:

• Cross-cultural psychology
• Organizational culture

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20. Intercultural and Plane Crashes

From [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_and_Plane_Crashes)

**Culture** can affect **aviation safety** through its effect on how the flight crew deals with difficult situations; cultures with lower power distances and higher levels of individuality can result in better aviation safety outcomes. In higher power cultures subordinates are less likely to question their superiors. The crash of [Korean Air Flight 801](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Air_Flight_801) in 1997 was attributed to the pilot's decision to land despite the junior officer's disagreement, while the crash of [Avianca Flight 52](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avianca_Flight_52) was caused by the failure to communicate critical low-fuel data between pilots and controllers, and by the failure of the controllers to ask the pilots if they were declaring an emergency and assist the pilots in landing the aircraft. The crashes have been blamed on aspects of the national cultures of the crews.[citation needed]

### Cultural differences in aviation

[Geert Hofstede](https://www.geert-hofstede.com/) classified national cultures into four dimensions, two of which can be applied to the flight deck: power distance, which defines the “nature of relations between subordinates and superiors”, or “how often subordinates are afraid to express disagreement”,[1] and whether the culture is collectivist or individualist in nature. Western cultures are individualistic and have a low power distance, whereas most Asian and Latin cultures are on the other side of the spectrum.[2]

### Past incidents

#### Tenerife Disaster

On March 27, 1977, two [Boeing 747](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_747) passenger jets, [KLM Flight 4805](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KLM_Flight_4805) and [Pan Am Flight 1736](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Am_Flight_1736), collided on the foggy runway at [Los Rodeos Airport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Rodeos_Airport) (now Tenerife North Airport), on the Spanish island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, killing 583 people, making it the [deadliest accident in aviation history](https://www.avactivism.org/history/deadliest-flight-disasters). Before takeoff, the KLM flight engineer expressed his concern about the Pan Am not being clear of the runway by asking the pilots in his own cockpit, “Is he not clear, that Pan American?” The KLM captain emphatically replied “Oh, yes” and continued with the takeoff, snubbing the junior officer's concern. This event led to widespread establishment of [crew resource management](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crew_resource_management) as a fundamental part of airline pilots' training.[6]
Korean Air Flight 801

On approach to Guam in 1997, Korean 801 crashed, mainly due to pilot fatigue and poor communication between the flight crew. The captain made the decision to land despite the junior officer's disagreements, eventually bringing the plane down short of the runway, highlighting how a pilot can contribute to a disaster. In high power distance cultures, it is uncommon for subordinates to question their superiors. “Leaders may be autocratic.” High power distance can be seen as the willingness to be in an unequal position, making it a challenge for an officer lower in the hierarchy to question the decisions of the one in power. At the same time, even in a high uncertainty avoidance culture, with the crew more likely to follow standard operating procedures (SOPs), the crew might react less efficiently to a novel situation.

Avianca Flight 52

Avianca 52 from Bogota to New York crashed after running out of fuel, a problem caused by language and cultural barriers. Both crew spoke Spanish as their primary language, but the first officer had better proficiency in English. “Colombia is a highly masculine, high power distance, and collectivist country”, which might have led to the crew's reluctance to ask for help from the New York controllers when they knew they were in trouble. In 1977, a cargo aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff from Anchorage en route to Tokyo, killing all 3 crew. The captain was a US national, with the other two being Japanese. Neither Japanese pilot mentioned the captain's intoxication or stopped him from flying the plane. They were reluctant to do so, and given Japan's moderately high power-distance index, their deference to authority could have been a major contributing factor. Had they done so, it would have humiliated the captain, who was clearly their superior, and from there on, it was impossible “to prevent the captain from taking control of the aircraft, even at the cost of an accident.”

Other impacts of culture in airline safety

Although crew resource management (CRM) can improve safety in the aviation industry, it is not widely accepted across all cultures. This is likely due to differences in uncertainty avoidance, or “the need for rule-governed behavior and clearly defined procedures”. Standard operating procedures are more easily accepted in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Greece, Korea, and some Latin cultures. In the United States, however, where flexibility is emphasized, pilots may not be as accepting of CRM culture.

Improvements can be made to CRM by drawing on the strengths of both individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Western assertiveness can be helpful in developing a low power–distance cockpit, while the Eastern interdependence brings cooperation, interdependence, and communication to create a safer flying environment.

Ideally, “CRM represents low power distance (free exchange of information among the crew) and collectivism (recognition and acceptance of crew interdependence), a rare cultural combination.”
References


10. ROSEKIND, MARK (FEBRUARY 1996). “CROSS-CULTURAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN AVIATION”. NTRS.


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Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- How do you recognize and resolve short- and long-term conflicts among group members and among groups?
- How does conflict arise in organizations?
- When and how do you negotiate, and how do you achieve a mutually advantageous agreement?
- How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

EXPLORING MANAGERIAL CAREERS: Conflict at Google

Over the past two years at Google, 48 people have been terminated for sexual harassment. There is a firm policy at Google pertaining to this type of misconduct, but when the effects of these types of events cause an uproar based on reports that a former top executive was paid millions of dollars after leaving Google despite misconduct and harassment allegations, it's important to get to the point of conflict and face it head on.
That’s exactly why Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai did just that. In an attempt to get ahead of the storm, Pichai wrote an email to explaining that none of the individuals that were asked to leave were given severance packages. Despite this, employees are still feeling upset over such claims.

“The culture of stigmatization and silence *enables* the abuse by making it harder to speak up and harder to be believed,” Liz Fong-Jones, who is quoted in the Times’s story, wrote on Twitter. “It’s the abuse of power relationships in situations where there was no consent, or consent was impossible.”

After the article came out in the New York Times reporting that Google gave Andy Rubin, former Android chief, a $90 million exit package, it was not just employees that were upset; there was external conflict between the company and Rubin. The media was heavily involved, including Bloomberg, and Rubin used social channels as well, making it even more complicated to counteract the negative comments or come to a resolution. Since the reports of Rubin’s actions as well as additional reports regarding Google’s permissive culture became public, Google has taken actions to update its policy on relationship disclosure.

This stance from the Google executive team is just one step in the right direction to address a culture that suggests a high level of conflict due to the protection of executives over the safety and well-being of the employees, who may be less likely to report incidents of abuse of power.


Conflict in Organizations: Basic Considerations

There are many ways to determine conflict as it relates to the workplace. For our purposes here, we will define conflict as the process by which individuals or groups react to other entities that have frustrated, or are about to frustrate, their plans, goals, beliefs, or activities. In other words, conflict involves situations in which the expectations or actual goal-directed behaviors of one person or group are blocked—or about to be blocked—by another person or group. Hence, if a sales representative cannot secure enough funds to mount what she considers to be an effective sales campaign, conflict can ensue. Similarly, if A gets promoted and B doesn’t, conflict can emerge. Finally, if a company finds it necessary to lay off valued employees because of difficult financial conditions, conflict can occur.
Types of Conflict

If we are to try to understand the roots of conflict, we need to know what type of conflict is present. At least four types of conflict can be identified:

1. **Goal conflict.** Goal conflict can occur when one person or group desires a different outcome than others do. This is simply a clash over whose goals are going to be pursued.

2. **Cognitive conflict** can result when one person or group holds ideas that are inconsistent with others’ ideas. This type of conflict is evident in political debates.

3. **Affective conflict** emerges when one person’s or group’s feelings or emotions (attitudes) are incompatible with those of others. This type is seen in situations where two individuals simply don’t get along with each other.

4. **Behavioral conflict** exists when one person or group does something (i.e., behaves in a certain way) that is unacceptable to others. An example is using profanity in the workplace.

Each of these types of conflict is usually triggered by different factors, and each can lead to very different responses by the individual or group.

Levels of Conflict

In addition to different types of conflict, there exist several different levels of conflict. Level refers to the number of individuals involved in the conflict. That is, is the conflict within just one person, between two people, between two or more groups, or between two or more organizations? Both the causes of a conflict and the most effective means to resolve it can be affected by level. Four such levels can be identified:

1. **Intrapersonal conflict** is conflict within one person. A person can be attracted to two equally appealing ideas or alternative ideas, such as two good job offers (approach-approach conflict) or repelled by two equally unpleasant alternatives, such as the threat of being fired if one fails to identify a coworker guilty of breaking plant rules (avoidance-avoidance conflict). In any case, **interpersonal conflict is within the individual.**

2. **Interpersonal conflict** occurs when two individuals disagree on some matter. For example, you can have an argument with a coworker over an issue of mutual concern. Such conflicts often tend to get highly personal because only two parties are involved and each person embodies the opposing position in the conflict. Hence, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the opponent’s position and her person.

3. **Intergroup conflict** can be found between groups. **Intergroup conflict** involves disagreements between two opposing social groups over goals or sharing resources. For example, conflict between the marketing and production units within a corporation as each vies for more resources to accomplish its subgoals. Intergroup conflict is typically the most complicated form of conflict because of the number of individuals involved. Coalitions form within and between groups, and an “us-against-them” mentality develops.

4. **Interorganizational conflict** in disputes between two companies in the same industry (for example, a disagreement between computer manufacturers over computer standards), between two companies in different industries or economic sectors (for example, a conflict between real estate interests and environmentalists over land use planning), and even between two or more countries (for example, a trade dispute between the United States and Japan or France). In each case, both parties inevitably feel the pursuit of their goals is being frustrated by the other party.
The Positive and Negative Sides of Conflict

There are some circumstances in which a moderate amount of conflict can be helpful. For example, conflict can stimulate innovation and change. Conflict can help individuals and group members grow and develop self-identities. As noted by Coser:

Conflict, which aims at a resolution of tension between antagonists, is likely to have stabilizing and integrative functions for the relationship. By permitting immediate and direct expression of rival claims, such social systems are able to readjust their structures by eliminating their sources of dissatisfaction. The multiple conflicts which they experience may serve to eliminate the causes for dissociation and to reestablish unity. These systems avail themselves, through the toleration and institutionalization of conflict, of an important stabilizing mechanism.  

Conflict can have negative consequences when people divert energies away from performance and goal attainment and direct them toward resolving the conflict. Continued conflict can take a heavy toll in terms of psychological well-being. As we will see in the next chapter, conflict has a major influence on stress and the psychophysical consequences of stress. Finally, continued conflict can also affect the social climate of the group and inhibit group cohesiveness.

Thus, conflict can be either functional or dysfunctional in work situations depending upon the nature of the conflict, its intensity, and its duration. Indeed, both too much and too little conflict can lead to a variety of negative outcomes, as discussed above. This is shown in Figure 2. In such circumstances, a moderate amount of conflict may be the best course of action. The issue for management, therefore, is not how to eliminate conflict but rather how to manage and resolve it when it occurs.

![Figure 2: The Relationship Between Conflict Intensity and Outcomes](source-image-url)

*Figure 2: The Relationship Between Conflict Intensity and Outcomes* Source: Adapted from L. David Brown, Managing Conflict at Organizational Interfaces, 1986 by Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., Reading, Massachusetts, Figure 1.1, p.8. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)
CONCEPT CHECK

1. Describe the types and levels of conflict found in organizations.
2. How can the use of power help and harm organizations?

Causes of Conflict in Organizations

2. How does conflict arise in organizations?

Here we will examine two aspects of the conflict process. First, several factors that have been found to contribute to conflict will be identified. After this, a model of conflict processes in organizations will be reviewed.

Why Organizations Have So Much Conflict

A number of factors are known to facilitate organizational conflict under certain circumstances. In summarizing the literature, Robert Miles points to several specific examples. These are as follows:

- **Task Interdependencies.** The first antecedent can be found in the nature of task interdependencies. In essence, the greater the extent of task interdependence among individuals or groups (that is, the more they have to work together or collaborate to accomplish a goal), the greater the likelihood of conflict if different expectations or goals exist among entities, in part because the interdependence makes avoiding the conflict more difficult. This occurs in part because high task interdependency heightens the intensity of relationships. Hence, a small disagreement can very quickly get blown up into a major issue.

- **Status Inconsistencies.** A second factor is status inconsistencies among the parties involved. For example, managers in many organizations have the prerogative to take personal time off during workdays to run errands, and so forth, whereas nonmanagerial personnel do not. Consider the effects this can have on the nonmanagers' view of organizational policies and fairness.

- **Jurisdictional Ambiguities.** Conflict can also emerge from jurisdictional ambiguities—situations where it is unclear exactly where responsibility for something lies. For example, many organizations use an employee selection procedure in which applicants are evaluated both by the personnel department and by the department in which the applicant would actually work. Because both departments are involved in the hiring process, what happens when one department wants to hire an individual, but the other department does not?

- **Communication Problems.** Various communication problems or ambiguities in the communication process can facilitate conflict. When one person misunderstands a message or when information is withheld, the person often responds with frustration and anger.
• Dependence on Common Resource Pool. Another previously discussed factor that contributes to conflict is dependence on common resource pools. Whenever several departments must compete for scarce resources, conflict is almost inevitable. When resources are limited, a zero-sum game exists in which someone wins and, invariably, someone loses.

• Lack of Common Performance Standards. Differences in performance criteria and reward systems provide more potential for organizational conflict. This often occurs because of a lack of common performance standards among differing groups within the same organization. For example, production personnel are often rewarded for their efficiency, and this efficiency is facilitated by the long-term production of a few products. Sales departments, on the other hand, are rewarded for their short-term response to market changes—often at the expense of long-term production efficiency. In such situations, conflict arises as each unit attempts to meet its own performance criteria.

• Individual Differences. Finally, a variety of individual differences, such as personal abilities, traits, and skills, can influence in no small way the nature of interpersonal relations. Individual dominance, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and tolerance for ambiguity all seem to influence how an individual deals with potential conflict. Indeed, such characteristics may determine whether or not conflict is created at all.

A Model of the Conflict Process

Having examined specific factors that are known to facilitate conflict, we can ask how conflict comes about in organizations. The most commonly accepted model of the conflict process was developed by Kenneth Thomas. This model, shown in Figure 3, consists of four stages: (1) frustration, (2) conceptualization, (3) behavior, and (4) outcome.

Stage 1: Frustration. As we have seen, conflict situations originate when an individual or group feels frustration in the pursuit of important goals. This frustration may be caused by a wide variety of factors, including disagreement over performance goals, failure to get a promotion or pay raise, a fight over scarce economic resources, new rules or policies, and so forth. In fact, conflict can be traced to frustration over almost anything a group or individual cares about.

Stage 2: Conceptualization. In stage 2, the conceptualization stage of the model, parties to the conflict attempt to understand the nature of the problem, what they themselves want as a resolution, what they think their opponents want as a resolution, and various strategies they feel each side may employ in resolving the conflict. This stage is really the problem-solving and strategy phase. For instance, when management and union negotiate a labor contract, both sides attempt to decide what is most important and what can be bargained away in exchange for these priority needs.

Stage 3: Behavior. The third stage in Thomas's model is actual behavior. As a result of the conceptualization process, parties to a conflict attempt to implement their resolution mode by competing or accommodating in the hope of resolving problems. A major task here is determining how best to proceed strategically. That is, what tactics will the party use to attempt to resolve the conflict? Thomas has identified five modes for conflict resolution, as shown in Figure 3. These are (1) competing, (2) collaborating, (3) compromising, (4) avoiding, and (5) accommodating. Also shown in the Figure are situations that seem most appropriate for each strategy.
The choice of an appropriate conflict resolution mode depends to a great extent on the situation and the goals of the party. This is shown graphically in Figure 4. According to this model, each party must decide the extent to which it is interested in satisfying its own concerns—called assertiveness—and the extent to which it is interested in helping satisfy the opponent’s concerns—called cooperativeness. Assertiveness can range from assertive to unassertive on one continuum, and cooperativeness can range from uncooperative to cooperative on the other continuum.

Once the parties have determined their desired balance between the two competing concerns—either consciously or unconsciously—the resolution strategy emerges. For example, if a union negotiator feels confident she can win on an issue that is of primary concern to union members (e.g., wages), a direct competition mode may be chosen (see upper left-hand corner of Figure 4). On the other hand, when the union is indifferent to an issue or when it actually supports management’s concerns (e.g., plant safety), we would expect an accommodating or collaborating mode (on the right-hand side of the Figure).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict-Handling Modes</th>
<th>Appropriate Situations</th>
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| Competing               | 1. When quick, decisive action is vital—e.g., emergencies  
                            2. On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing—e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline  
                            3. On issues vital to company welfare when you know you're right  
                            4. Against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior |
| Collaborating           | 1. When trying to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised  
                            2. When your objective is to learn  
                            3. When merging insights from people with different perspectives  
                            4. When gaining commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus  
                            5. When working through feelings that have interfered with a relationship |
| Compromising            | 1. When goals are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes  
                            2. When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals  
                            3. When attempting to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues  
                            4. When arriving at expedient solutions under time pressure  
                            5. As a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful |
| Avoiding                | 1. When an issue is trivial, or when more important issues are pressing  
                            2. When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns  
                            3. When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution  
                            4. When letting people cool down and regain perspective  
                            5. When gathering information supersedes immediate decision  
                            6. When others can resolve the conflict more effectively  
                            7. When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues |
| Accommodating           | 1. When you find you are wrong—to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness  
                            2. When issues are more important to others than yourself—to satisfy others and maintain cooperation  
                            3. When building social credits for later issues  
                            4. When minimizing loss when you are outmatched and losing  
                            5. When harmony and stability are especially important.  
                            6. When allowing subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes. |

_Source: Adapted from K. W. Thomas, “Toward Multidimensional Values in Teaching: The Example of Conflict Behaviors,” Academy of Management Review 2 (1977), Table 1, p. 487._

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What is interesting in this process is the assumptions people make about their own modes compared to their opponents'. For example, in one study of executives, it was found that the executives typically described themselves as using collaboration or compromise to resolve conflict, whereas these same executives typically described their opponents as using a competitive mode almost exclusively. In other words, the executives underestimated their opponents' concern as uncompromising. Simultaneously, the executives had flattering portraits of their own willingness to satisfy both sides in a dispute.

**Stage 4: Outcome.** Finally, as a result of efforts to resolve the conflict, both sides determine the extent to which a satisfactory resolution or outcome has been achieved. Where one party to the conflict does not feel satisfied or feels only partially satisfied, the seeds of discontent are sown for a later conflict, as shown in the preceding Figure 2. One unresolved conflict episode can easily set the stage for a second episode. Managerial action aimed at achieving quick and satisfactory resolution is vital; failure to initiate such action leaves the possibility (more accurately, the probability) that new conflicts will soon emerge.

**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. Why do organizations have so much conflict?
2. Describe the process of the conflict model.

**Resolving Conflict in Organizations**

When and how do you negotiate, and how do you achieve a mutually advantageous agreement?

We have discovered that conflict is pervasive throughout organizations and that some conflict can be good for organizations. People often grow and learn from conflict, as long as the conflict is not dysfunctional. The challenge for managers is to select a resolution strategy appropriate to the situation and individuals involved. A review of past management practice in this regard reveals that managers often make poor strategy choices. As often as not, managers select repressive or ineffective conflict resolution strategies.

**Common Strategies that Seldom Work**

At leave five conflict resolution techniques commonly found in organizations prove to be ineffective fairly consistently. In fact, not only do such techniques seldom work—in many cases, they actually serve to increase the
Nonetheless, they are found with alarming frequency in a wide array of business and public organizations. These five ineffective strategies are often associated with an avoidance approach and are described below.

**Nonaction.** Perhaps the most common managerial response when conflict emerges is nonaction—doing nothing and ignoring the problem. It may be felt that if the problem is ignored, it will go away. Unfortunately, that is not often the case. In fact, ignoring the problem may serve only to increase the frustration and anger of the parties involved.

**Administrative Orbiting.** In some cases, managers will acknowledge that a problem exists but then take little serious action. Instead, they continually report that a problem is “under study” or that “more information is needed.” Telling a person who is experiencing a serious conflict that “these things take time” hardly relieves anyone’s anxiety or solves any problems. This ineffective strategy for resolving conflict is aptly named administrative orbiting.

**Due Process Nonaction.** A third ineffective approach to resolving conflict is to set up a recognized procedure for redressing grievances but at the same time to ensure that the procedure is long, complicated, costly, and perhaps even risky. The due process nonaction strategy is to wear down the dissatisfied employee while at the same time claiming that resolution procedures are open and available. This technique has been used repeatedly in conflicts involving race and sex discrimination.

**Secrecy.** Oftentimes, managers will attempt to reduce conflict through secrecy. Some feel that by taking secretive actions, controversial decisions can be carried out with a minimum of resistance. One argument for pay secrecy (keeping employee salaries secret) is that such a policy makes it more difficult for employees to feel inequitably treated. Essentially, this is a “what they don’t know won’t hurt them” strategy. A major problem of this approach is that it leads to distrust of management. When managerial credibility is needed for other issues, it may be found lacking.

**Character Assassination.** The final ineffective resolution technique to be discussed here is character assassination. The person with a conflict, perhaps a woman claiming sex discrimination, is labeled a “troublemaker.” Attempts are made to discredit her and distance her from the others in the group. The implicit strategy here is that if the person can be isolated and stigmatized, she will either be silenced by negative group pressures or she will leave. In either case, the problem is “solved.”

### Strategies for Preventing Conflict

On the more positive side, there are many things managers can do to reduce or actually solve dysfunctional conflict when it occurs. These fall into two categories: actions directed at conflict prevention and actions directed at conflict reduction. We shall start by examining conflict prevention techniques, because preventing conflict is often easier than reducing it once it begins. These include:

1. **Emphasizing organization-wide goals and effectiveness.** Focusing on organization-wide goals and objectives should prevent goal conflict. If larger goals are emphasized, employees are more likely to see the big picture and work together to achieve corporate goals.

2. **Providing stable, well-structured tasks.** When work activities are clearly defined, understood, and accepted by employees, conflict should be less likely to occur. Conflict is most likely to occur when task uncertainty is high; specifying or structuring jobs minimizes ambiguity.

3. **Facilitating intergroup communication.** Misperception of the abilities, goals, and motivations of others often leads to conflict, so efforts to increase the dialogue among groups and to share information should help eliminate conflict. As groups come to know more about one another, suspicions often diminish, and greater intergroup teamwork becomes possible.

4. **Avoiding win-lose situations.** If win-lose situations are avoided, less potential for conflict exists. When resources are scarce, management can seek some form of resource sharing to achieve organizational effectiveness. Moreover, rewards can be given for contributions to overall corporate objectives; this will foster a climate in which groups seek solutions acceptable to all.
These points bear a close resemblance to descriptions of the so-called Japanese management style. In Japanese firms, considerable effort is invested in preventing conflict. In this way, more energy is available for constructive efforts.

**STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING CONFLICT**

Where dysfunctional conflict already exists, something must be done, and managers may pursue one of at least two general approaches: they can try to change employee attitudes, or they can try to change employee behaviors. If they change behavior, open conflict is often reduced, but groups may still dislike one another; the conflict simply becomes less visible as the groups are separated from one another. Changing attitudes, on the other hand, often leads to fundamental changes in the ways that groups get along. However, it also takes considerably longer to accomplish than behavior change because it requires a fundamental change in social perceptions.

Nine conflict reduction strategies are shown in Figure 5. The techniques should be viewed as a continuum, ranging from strategies that focus on changing behaviors near the top of the scale to strategies that focus on changing attitudes near the bottom of the scale.

1. **Physical separation.** The quickest and easiest solution to conflict is physical separation. Separation is useful when conflicting groups are not working on a joint task or do not need a high degree of interaction. Though this approach does not encourage members to change their attitudes, it does provide time to seek a better accommodation.

2. **Use of rules and regulations.** Conflict can also be reduced through the increasing specification of rules, regulations, and procedures. This approach, also known as the bureaucratic method, imposes solutions on groups from above. Again, however, basic attitudes are not modified.

3. **Limiting intergroup interaction.** Another approach to reducing conflict is to limit intergroup interaction to issues involving common goals. Where groups agree on a goal, cooperation becomes easier. An example of this can be seen in recent efforts by firms in the United States and Canada to work together to “meet the Japanese challenge.”

4. **Use of integrators.** Integrators are individuals who are assigned a boundary-spanning role between two groups or departments. To be trusted, integrators must be perceived by both groups as legitimate and knowledgeable. The integrator often takes the “shuttle diplomacy” approach, moving from one group to another, identifying areas of agreement, and attempting to find areas of future cooperation.

5. **Confrontation and negotiation.** In this approach, competing parties are brought together face-to-face to discuss their basic areas of disagreement. The hope is that through open discussion and negotiation, means can be found to work out problems. Contract negotiations between union and management represent one such example. If a “win-win” solution can be identified through these negotiations, the chances of an acceptable resolution of the conflict increase. (More will be said about this in the next section of this chapter.)

6. **Third-party consultation.** In some cases, it is helpful to bring in outside consultants for third-party consultation who understand human behavior and can facilitate a resolution. A third-party consultant not only serves as a go-between but can speak more directly to the issues, because she is not a member of either group.

7. **Rotation of members.** By rotating from one group to another, individuals come to understand the frames of reference, values, and attitudes of other members; communication is thus increased. When those rotated are accepted by the receiving groups, change in attitudes as well as behavior becomes possible. This is clearly a long-term technique, as it takes time to develop good interpersonal relations and understanding among group members.

8. **Identification of interdependent tasks and superordinate goals.** A further strategy for management is to establish goals that require groups to work together to achieve overall success—for example, when company survival is threatened. The threat of a shutdown often causes long-standing opponents to come together to achieve the common objective of keeping the company going.
9. **Use of intergroup training.** The final technique on the continuum is intergroup training. Outside training experts are retained on a long-term basis to help groups develop relatively permanent mechanisms for working together. Structured workshops and training programs can help forge more favorable intergroup attitudes and, as a result, more constructive intergroup behavior.

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**Figure 5 Conflict Reduction Strategies**

Source: Adapted from concepts in E. H. Neilsen, “Understanding and Managing Conflict,” in J. Lorsch and P. Lawrence, eds., Managing Group and Intergroup Relations (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1972). (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target of Change</th>
<th>Conflict Reduction Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>1. Physical separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Bureaucratic method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Limited interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Integrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Confrontation and negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Third-party consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Rotation of members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Interdependent tasks and superordinate goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Intergroup training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**CONCEPT CHECK**

1. Describe conflict strategies that seldom work.
2. What are the strategies that managers can use that can reduce conflict?

---

**Negotiation Behavior**

How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

We have seen the central role conflict plays in organizational processes. Clearly, there are some areas where managers would prefer to solve a problem between two parties before it results in high levels of conflict. This is usually accomplished through negotiation. **Negotiation** is the process by which individuals or groups attempt to realize their goals by bargaining with another party who has at least some control over goal attainment. Throughout the negotiation process, considerable skill in communication, decision-making, and the use of power and politics is required in order to succeed.
We will consider several aspects of negotiation, including stages of negotiation, types of negotiation behavior, and the negotiation process itself. We begin with the reasons why people engage in negotiation and bargaining in the first place.

Stages of Negotiation

In general, negotiation and bargaining are likely to have four stages. Although the length or importance of each stage can vary from situation to situation or from one culture to another, the presence and sequence of these stages are quite common across situations and cultures.  

1. **Non-task time.** During the first stage, the participants focus on getting to know and become comfortable with each other and do not focus directly on the task or issue of the negotiation. In cultures such as ours, this stage is often filled with small talk. However, it is usually not very long and is not seen as important as other stages. North Americans use phrases such as “Let’s get down to business,” “I know you’re busy, so let’s get right to it,” and “Let’s not beat around the bush.” However, in other cultures such as Mexico or South Korea, the non-task stage is often longer and of more importance because it is during this stage the relationship is established. In these cultures, it is the relationship more than the contract that determines the extent to which each party can trust the other to fulfill its obligations.

2. **Information exchange.** The second stage of negotiations involves the exchange of background and general information. During this stage, participants may, for example, provide overviews of their company and its history. In Japan, this is an important stage because specific proposals or agreements must be considered and decided in the larger context. The information exchanged during the second stage provides this larger context.

3. **Influence and persuasion.** The third stage involves efforts to influence and persuade the other side. Generally, these efforts are designed to get the other party to reduce its demands or desires and to increase its acceptance of your demands or desires. There are a wide variety of influence tactics, including promises, threats, questions, and so on. The use of these tactics as well as their effectiveness is a function of several factors. First, the perceived or real power of one party relative to another is an important factor. For example, if one party is the only available supplier of a critical component, then threatening to go to a new supplier of that component unless the price is reduced is unlikely to be an effective influence tactic. Second, the effectiveness of a particular influence tactic is also a function of accepted industry and cultural norms. For example, if threats are an unacceptable form of influence, then their use could lead to consequences opposite from what is desired by the initiator of such tactics.

4. **Closing.** The final stage of any negotiation is the closing. The closing may result in an acceptable agreement between the parties involved or it may result in failure to reach an agreement. The symbols that represent the close of a negotiation vary across cultures. For example, in the United States, a signed contract is the symbol of a closed negotiation. At that point, “a deal is a deal” and failure to abide by the contents of the document is considered a breach of contract. In China, however, there is not the strong legal history or perspective that exists in the United States, and a signed document is not necessarily a symbol of the close of the negotiations. In fact, to some extent it symbolizes the beginning of the final points of negotiation. The signed document identifies the key issues that still need to be negotiated despite the fact that it may contain specific obligations for the involved parties concerning these issues. Quite simply, even though the document may obligate one party to deliver a product on a certain day and obligate the other party to pay a certain price for delivery, the document itself does not symbolize that the negotiation concerning these specifics is closed.

Each of these four stages and the sequence described above are common across most situations and cultures. However, the length of time devoted to each stage, the importance of each stage, and the specific behaviors associated with each stage can vary by situation and certainly do vary by culture.
Bargaining Strategies

Within the context of these four stages, both parties must select an appropriate strategy that they believe will assist them in the attainment of their objectives. In general, two rather distinct approaches to negotiation can be identified. These are distributive bargaining and integrative bargaining. A comparison of these two approaches is shown in Table 2.

**Distributive Bargaining.** In essence, distributive bargaining is “win-lose” bargaining. That is, the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize her share of these resources. Finally, in most cases, this situation represents a short-term relationship between the two parties. In fact, such parties may not see each other ever again.

A good example of this can be seen in the relationship between the buyer and seller of a house. If the buyer gets the house for less money (that is, she “wins”), the seller also gets less (that is, she “loses”). This win-lose situation can also be seen in classes where the professor insists on grading on a specified curve. If your friends get an A, there are fewer As to go around, and your chances are diminished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two Approaches to Bargaining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bargaining Characteristic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payoff structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Under such circumstances, each side will probably adopt a course of action as follows. First, each side to a dispute will attempt to discover just how far the other side is willing to go to reach an accord. This can be done by offering outrageously low (or high) proposals simply to feel out the opponent. For example, in selling a house, the seller will typically ask a higher price than she actually hopes to get (see Figure 6). The buyer, in turn, typically offers far less than she is willing to pay. These two prices are put forth to discover the opponent’s resistance price. The resistance price is the point beyond which the opponent will not go to reach a settlement. Once the resistance point has been estimated, each party tries to convince the opponent that the offer on the table is the best one the opponent is likely to receive and that the opponent should accept it. As both sides engage in similar tactics, the winner is often determined by who has the best strategic and political skills to convince the other party that this is the best she can get.

**Integrative Bargaining** Integrative bargaining is often described as the “win-win” approach. That is, with this technique, both parties try to reach a settlement that benefits both parties. Such an approach is often predicated on the belief that if people mutually try to solve the problem, they can identify some creative solutions that help everyone. A good example can be seen in bilateral trade negotiations between two nations. In such negotiations, participants usually agree that a trade war would hurt both sides; therefore, both sides attempt to achieve a balance of outcomes that are preferable to a trade war for both sides. In doing so, however, the trick is to give away as little as possible to achieve the balance.
As shown previously in Table 2, this approach is characterized by the existence of variable resources to be divided, efforts to maximize joint outcomes, and the desire to establish or maintain a long-term relationship. The interests of the two parties may be convergent (noncompetitive, such as preventing a trade war between two countries) or congruent (mutually supportive, as when two countries reach a mutual defense pact).

In both cases, bargaining tactics are quite different from those typically found in distributive bargaining. Here, both sides must be able and willing to understand the viewpoints of the other party. Otherwise, they will not know where possible consensus lies. Moreover, the free flow of information is required. Obviously, some degree of trust is required here too. In discussions, emphasis is placed on identifying communalities between the two parties; the differences are played down. And, finally, the search for a solution focuses on selecting those courses of action that meet the goals and objectives of both sides. This approach requires considerably more time and energy than distributive bargaining, yet, under certain circumstances, it has the potential to lead to far more creative and long-lasting solutions.

The Negotiation Process

The negotiation process consists of identifying one’s desired goals—that is, what you are trying to get out of the exchange—and then developing suitable strategies aimed at reaching those goals. A key feature of one’s strategy is knowing one’s relative position in the bargaining process. That is, depending upon your relative position or strength, you may want to negotiate seriously or you may want to tell your opponent to “take it or leave it.” The dynamics of bargaining power can be extrapolated directly from the discussion of power Table 3 and indicate several conditions affecting this choice.
When to Negotiate

Bargaining Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the Situation</th>
<th>Negotiate</th>
<th>“Take It or Leave It”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value of exchange</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to a decision</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Ample</td>
<td>Pressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power distribution*</td>
<td>Low or balanced</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between two parties</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates relative power distribution between the two parties; “low” indicates that one has little power in the situation, whereas “high” indicates that one has considerable power.

Table 3 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Once goals and objectives have been clearly established and the bargaining strategy is set, time is required to develop a suitable plan of action. Planning for negotiation requires a clear assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of your opponents. Roy Lewicki and Joseph Litterer have suggested a format for preparation for negotiation. According to this format, planning for negotiation should proceed through the following phases:

**Phases of effective negotiation.**

1. Understand the nature of the conflict. What are the primary areas of agreement and disagreement?
2. What do you want out of this negotiation? What are your goals?
3. How will you manage the negotiation process? Here, several issues should be recognized:
   a. Identify the primary issues to negotiate.
   b. Prioritize these issues.
   c. Develop a desirable package including these important issues.
   d. Establish an agenda.
4. Do you understand your opponent?
   a. What are your opponent’s current resources and needs?
   b. What is the history of your opponent’s bargaining behavior? What patterns can you see that can help you predict her moves?
In Table 4, for example, we can see differences in both the planning approaches and the actual behaviors of successful and average negotiators. Preparation clearly makes a difference, as does interpersonal style during the actual negotiation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences Between Successful and Average Negotiations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiation Behavior</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before the Negotiation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of options considered per issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion of time spent focusing on anticipated areas of agreement instead of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During Negotiation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion of time spent asking questions of opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion of time spent in active listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion of time spent attacking opponent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)
Cultural Differences in International Negotiations

In view of the increased emphasis on international industrial competitiveness, it is important to understand what happens when the two parties to a negotiation come from different cultures or countries. A knowledge of cultural differences can assist the manager both in understanding the other party's position and in striking the best possible deal given the circumstances.

A good way to start this analysis is by recognizing how different cultures approach the art of persuasion; that is, how do people in different countries try to win you over to their side in a dispute? As can be seen in Table 5, North Americans, Arabs, and Russians have different approaches to persuasion.

### National Styles of Persuasion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North Americans</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
<th>Russians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary negotiating style and process</strong></td>
<td>Factual: appeals made to logic</td>
<td>Affective: appeals made to emotions</td>
<td>Axiomatic: appeals made to Ideals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict: opponent's arguments countered with</strong></td>
<td>Objective facts</td>
<td>Subjective feelings</td>
<td>Asserted ideals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making concessions</strong></td>
<td>Small concessions made early to establish a relationship</td>
<td>Concessions made throughout as a part of the bargaining process</td>
<td>Few, if any, small concessions made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response to opponent's concessions</strong></td>
<td>Usually reciprocate opponent's concessions</td>
<td>Almost always reciprocate opponent's concessions</td>
<td>Opponent's concessions viewed as weakness and almost never reciprocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship</strong></td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>No continuing relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authority</strong></td>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial position</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deadline</strong></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Ignored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 5 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

We can also examine the personal characteristics of negotiators from different countries. A study by John Graham focused on the key characteristics of negotiators in the United States, Japan, Taiwan, and Brazil. Results of the study are shown in Table 6, which shows the rank order of the defining characteristics.

### Key Individual Characteristics of Negotiators (Rank Order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Managers</th>
<th>Japanese Managers</th>
<th>Chinese Managers (Taiwan)</th>
<th>Brazilian Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and planning skill</td>
<td>Dedication to job</td>
<td>Persistence and determination</td>
<td>Preparation and planning skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking under pressure</td>
<td>Perceive and exploit power</td>
<td>Win respect and confidence</td>
<td>Thinking under pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and intelligence</td>
<td>Win respect and confidence</td>
<td>Preparation and planning skill</td>
<td>Judgment and intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal expressiveness</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Product knowledge</td>
<td>Verbal expressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product knowledge</td>
<td>Listening skill</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Product knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceive and exploit power</td>
<td>Broad perspective</td>
<td>Judgment and intelligence</td>
<td>Perceive and exploit power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Verbal expressiveness</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “Key Individual Characteristics of Negotiators” by John Graham, Graduate School of Management, University of California, Irvine.
Finally, we should note that negotiators from different countries differ in their verbal and nonverbal communication patterns. In one study (again among United States Americans – represented as North America; Japanese, – representing East Asia; and Brazilians – representing South America), observers counted the number of times each negotiator did certain things within a given time limit. The results are shown in Table 7. As can be seen, these negotiators use both verbal and nonverbal communication in very different ways. Note, for example, that Brazilians on average said “no” 83 times within a 30-minute segment, compared to 5 times for Japanese and 9 times for Americans. On the other hand, Japanese appealed to ideals and societal norms and simply sat in silence more than the others. Such differences affect not only the negotiation process but also, in many cases, the outcomes. Hence, again we see the value of better understanding cultural variations in negotiations, as in other matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making promises</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making threats</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making recommendations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing to ideals and norms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a command</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying “no”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making initial concessions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonverbal Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periods of silence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrupting opponent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking directly into opponent's eyes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching opponent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Key Terms

**Affective conflict**
- Seen in situations where two individuals simply don't get along with each other.

**Behavioral conflict**
- Exists when one person or group does something that is unacceptable to others.

**Cognitive conflict**
- Can result when one person or group holds ideas or opinions that are inconsistent with those of others.

**Conflict**
- The four types of conflict are goal conflict, cognitive conflict, affective conflict, and behavioral conflict.
Constructive confrontation
A conflict that leads to a positive result.

Goal conflict
Can occur when one person or group desires a different outcome than others do. This is simply a clash over whose goals are going to be pursued.

Intergroup conflict
Usually involves disagreements between two opposing forces over goals or the sharing of resources.

Interorganizational conflict
Disputes between two companies in the same industry, two companies in different industries or economic sectors, or two or more countries.

Interpersonal conflict
Where two individuals disagree on some matter.

Intrapersonal conflict
A conflict within one person.

Assertiveness
Can range from assertive to unassertive on one continuum.

Cooperativeness
The extent to which someone is interested in helping satisfy the opponent's concerns.

Frustration
May be caused by a wide variety of factors, including disagreement over performance goals, failure to get a promotion or pay raise, a fight over scarce economic resources, new rules or policies, and so forth.

Jurisdictional ambiguities
Situations where it is unclear exactly where responsibility for something lies.

Status inconsistencies
Situations where some individuals have the opportunity to benefit whereas other employees do not. Consider the effects this can have on the nonmanagers' view of organizational policies and fairness.

Task interdependencies
The greater the extent of task interdependence among individuals or groups, the greater the likelihood of conflict if different expectations or goals exist among entities, in part because the interdependence makes avoiding the conflict more difficult.

Administrative orbiting
An ineffective strategy for resolving conflict.

Character assassination
An ineffective resolution technique where the person with a conflict attempts to discredit and distance an individual from the others in the group.

Due process nonaction
The strategy of wearing down a dissatisfied employee while at the same time claiming that resolution procedures are open and available. This technique has been used repeatedly in conflicts involving race and sex discrimination.

Negotiation
The process by which individuals or groups attempt to realize their goals by bargaining with another party who has at least some control over goal attainment.

Third-party consultation
An outside consultant that serves as a go-between and can speak more directly to the issues because she is not a member of either group.

BATNA
An acronym popularised by Roger Fisher and William Ury which stands for 'Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement'. BATNA answers the question: 'What would you do if you weren't able to agree a deal with your negotiation counterparty?' Your BATNA is the alternative action you'll take should your proposed agreement fail to
Distributive bargaining
Where the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize its share of these resources.

Integrative bargaining
Essentially “win-lose” bargaining where the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize its share of these resources.

Resistance price
The point beyond which the opponent will not go to reach a settlement.

Summary of Learning Outcomes

Conflict in Organizations: Basic Considerations

1. How do you recognize and resolve short- and long-term conflicts among group members and among groups?

Conflict is the process by which a person or group feels frustrated in the pursuit of certain goals, plans, or objectives. Conflict may take one of four forms: (1) goal, (2) cognitive, (3) affective, or (4) behavioral. Conflict may occur on several levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational.

Causes of Conflict in Organizations

2. How does conflict arise in organizations?

Conflict in organizations can be caused by task interdependencies, status inconsistencies, jurisdictional ambiguities, communication problems, dependence on common resource pools, lack of common performance standards, and individual differences. A model of the conflict process follows four stages. Conflict originates (stage 1) when an individual or group experiences frustration in the pursuit of important goals. In stage 2, the individual or group attempts to understand the nature of the problem and its causes. In stage 3, efforts are made to change behavioral patterns in such a way that the desired outcome, or stage 4, is achieved.

Resolving Conflict in Organizations

3. When and how do you negotiate, and how do you achieve a mutually advantageous agreement?

Ineffective conflict resolution strategies include nonaction, administrative orbiting, due process nonaction, secrecy, and character assassination. Strategies for preventing conflict include (1) emphasizing organization-wide goals; (2) providing stable, well-structured tasks; (3) facilitating intergroup communication; and (4) avoiding win-lose situations. Strategies for reducing conflict include (1) physical separation, (2) use of rules and regulations, (3) limiting intergroup interaction, (4) use of integrators, (5) confrontation and negotiation, (6) third-party consultation, (7) rotation of members, (8)
Negotiation is the process by which individuals and groups attempt to reach their goals by bargaining with others who can help or hinder goal attainment. Negotiation is helpful in three primary instances: (1) a conflict of interest, (2) the absence of clear rules or procedures, and (3) when there is a desire to avoid a fight. Distributive bargaining attempts to resolve a win-lose conflict in which resources are limited and each party wishes to maximize its share of these resources. Integrative bargaining occurs when both parties attempt to reach a settlement that benefits both sides in a dispute.

Negotiation Behavior

4. How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

A resistance point is the point beyond which an opponent will not go to reach a settlement. Planning for a negotiation session involves (1) understanding the basic nature of the conflict, (2) knowing what the group wants to achieve in the session, (3) selecting a chief negotiator, and (4) understanding one’s opponent. Cultural differences play a major role in the negotiation process and influence such factors as persuasion techniques, the key characteristics of the negotiators, and communication patterns.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Identify the types of conflict commonly found in organizations, and provide examples of each.
2. How can conflict be good for an organization?
3. Identify some reasons for the prevalence of intergroup conflict in organizations.
4. How does intergroup conflict affect behavior within a work group? behavior between two or more groups?
5. Review the basic conflict model discussed in this chapter. What lessons for management follow from this model?
6. Of the various strategies for resolving and preventing conflicts that are presented in this chapter, which ones do you feel will generally be most effective? least effective? Why?
7. What is the difference between distributive and integrative bargaining? When would each be most appropriate?
8. How can cultural differences affect bargaining behavior? If you were negotiating with a Japanese firm, what might you do differently than if you were facing an American firm? Explain.

Sources:
S. Flax, “The Ten Toughest Bosses in America,” Fortune, August 6, 1984, p. 21;

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