Continue

By the end of this section, you will be able to: Discuss the five stages of team development. Describe different positive and negative team roles. Describe strategies for cultivating a positive group climate. Describe common types and causes of conflict that arise within teams. Group dynamics involve the interactions and processes of a team and influence the degree to which members feel a part of the goal and mission. A team with a strong identity can prove to be a powerful force. One that exerts too much control over individual members, however, runs the risk or reducing creative interactions, resulting in tunnel vision. A team that exerts too little control, neglecting all concern for process and areas of specific responsibility, may go nowhere. Striking a balance between motivation and encouragement is key to maximizing group productivity. A skilled communicator creates a positive team by first selecting members based on their areas of skill and expertise. Attention to each member's style of communication also ensures the team's smooth operation. If their talents are essential, introverts who prefer working alone may need additional encouragement to participate. Extroverts may need encouragement to listen to others and not dominate the conversation. Both are necessary, however, so the selecting for a diverse group of team members deserves serious consideration. Stages of Team Development For teams to be effective, the people in the team must be able to work together to contribute collectively to team outcomes. But this does not happen automatically: it develops as the team works together. You have probably had an experience when you have been put on a team to work on a school assignment or project. When your team first gets together, you likely sit around and look at each other, not knowing how to begin. Initially you are not a team; you are just individuals assigned to work together. Over time you get to know each other, to know what to expect from each other, to know how to divide the labor and assign tasks, and to know how you will coordinate your work. Through this process, you begin to operate as a team instead of a collection of individuals. This process of learning to work together effectively is known as team development. Research has shown that teams go through definitive stages during development. Tuckman (1965) identified a five-stage development process that most teams follow to become high performing. He called the stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Figure 9.7) Figure 9.7 Most high-performing teams go through five stages of team development. Tuckman's Stages of Group Development – pngegg.com – CC BY NC 4.0. Forming stage The forming stage involves a period of orientation and getting acquainted (Figure 9.8). Uncertainty is high during this stage, and people are looking for leadership and authority. A member who asserts authority or is knowledgeable may be expected to take control. Team members are asking such questions as "What does the team offer me?" "What is expected of me?" "Will I fit in?" Most interactions are social as members get to know each other. Figure 9.8 Forming a team at work often involves a period of getting to know each other. Coworkers in Meeting – 089photoshootings – CC BY 4.0. Storming stage The storming stage is the most difficult and critical stage to pass through. It is a period marked by conflict and competition as individual personalities emerge. Team performance may actually decrease in this stage because energy is put into unproductive activities. Members may disagree on team goals, and subgroups and cliques may form around strong personalities or areas of agreement. To get through this stage, members must work to overcome obstacles, to accept individual differences, and to work through conflicting ideas on team tasks and goals. Teams can get bogged down in this stage. Failure to address conflicts may result in long-term problems. Norming stage If teams get through the storming stage, conflict is resolved and some degree of unity emerges. In the norming stage, consensus develops around who the leader or leaders are, and individual member's roles. Interpersonal differences begin to be resolved, and a sense of cohesion and unity emerges (Figure 9.9). Team performance increases during this stage as members learn to cooperate and begin to focus on team goals. However, the harmony is precarious, and if disagreements re-emerge the team can revert to storming. Figure 9.9 A Norming group develops a degree of cooperation and smooth work flow. Group Working Together on a Project – StockSnap – Pixabay License. Performing stage In the performing stage, consensus and cooperation have been well-established and the team is mature, organized, and well-functioning. There is a clear and stable structure, and members are committed to the team's mission. Problems and conflicts still emerge, but they are dealt with constructively. The team is focused on problem solving and meeting team goals. Adjourning stage In the adjourning stage, most of the team's goals have been accomplished. The emphasis is on wrapping up final tasks and documenting the effort and results. As the work load is diminished, individual members may be reassigned to other teams, and the team disbands. There may be regret as the team ends, so a ceremonial acknowledgement of the work and success of the team can be helpful. If the team is a standing committee with ongoing responsibility, members may be replaced by new people and the team can go back to a forming or storming stage and repeat the development process. Positive and Negative Team Roles When a manager selects a team for a particular project, its success depends on its members filling various positive roles. There are a few standard roles that must be represented to achieve the team's goals, but diversity is also key. Without an initiator-coordinator stepping up into a leadership position, for instance, the team will be a non-starter because team members such as the elaborator will just wait for more direction from the manager, who is busy with other things. If all the team members commit to filling a leadership role, however, the group will stall from the get-go with power struggles until the most dominant personality vanquishes the others, who will be bitterly unproductive relegated to a subordinate worker-bee role. A good manager must therefore be a good psychologist in building a team with diverse personality types and talents. Table 9.1 below captures some of these roles. Table 9.1 Positive Roles in Teams Role Actions Initiator-Coordinator Suggests new ideas or new ways of looking at the problem Elaborator Builds on ideas and provides examples Coordinator Brings ideas, information, and suggestions together Evaluator-Critic Evaluates ideas and provides constructive criticism Recorder Records ideas, examples, suggestions, and critiques Comic Relief Uses humor to keep the team happy Of course, each team member here contributes work irrespective of their typical roles. The groupmate who always wanted to be recorder in high school because they thought that all they had to do what jot down some notes about what other people said and did, and otherwise contributed nothing, would be a liability as a slacker in a workplace team. We must therefore contrast the above roles with negative roles, some of which are captured in Table 9.2 below. Table 9.2 Negative Roles in Teams Role Actions Dominator Dominates discussion so others can't take their turn Recognition Seeker Seeks attention by relating discussion to their actions Special-Interest Pleader Relates discussion to special interests or personal agenda Blocker Blocks attempts at consensus consistently Slacker Does little-to-no work, forcing others to pick up the slack Joker or Clown Seeks attention through humor and distracting members Whether a team member has a positive or negative effect often depends on context. Just as the class clown can provide some much-needed comic relief when the timing's right, they can also impede productivity when they merely distract members during work periods. An initiator-coordinator gets things started and provides direction, but a dominator will put down others' ideas, belittle their contributions, and ultimately force people to contribute little and withdraw partially or altogether. Perhaps the worst of all roles is the slacker. If you consider a game of tug-o-war between two teams of even strength, success depends on everyone on the team pulling as hard as they would if they were in a one-on-one match. The tendency of many, however, is to slack off a little, thinking that their contribution won't be noticed and that everyone else on the team will make up for their lack of effort. The team's work output will be much less than the sum of its parts, however, if everyone else thinks this, too. Preventing slacker tendencies requires clearly articulating in writing the expectations for everyone's individual contributions. With such a contract to measure individual performance, each member can be held accountable for their work and take pride in their contribution to solving all the problems that the team overcame on its road to success. Cultivating a Supportive Group Climate Any time a group of people comes together, new dynamics are put into place that differ from the dynamics present in our typical dyadic interactions. The impressions we form about other people's likeability and the way we think about a group's purpose are affected by the climate within a group that is created by all members. When something is cohesive it sticks together, and the cohesion within a group helps establish an overall group climate. Group climate refers to the relatively enduring tone and quality of group interaction that is experienced similarly by group members. To better understand cohesion and climate, we can examine two types of cohesion: task and social. Task cohesion refers to the commitment of group members to the purpose and activities of the group. Social cohesion refers to the attraction and liking among group members. Ideally, groups would have an appropriate balance between these two types of cohesion relative to the group's purpose, with task-oriented groups having higher task cohesion and relational-oriented groups having higher social cohesion. Even the most task-focused groups need some degree of social cohesion, and vice versa, but the balance will be determined by the purpose of the group and the individual members. For example, a team of workers from the local car dealership may join a local summer softball league because they're good friends and love the game. They may end up beating the team of faculty members from the community college who joined the league just to get to know each other better and have an excuse to get together and drink beer in the afternoon. In this example, the players from the car dealership exhibit high social and task cohesion, while the faculty exhibit high social but low task cohesion. Cohesion benefits a group in many ways and can be assessed through specific group behaviors and characteristics. Groups with an appropriate level of cohesiveness (Hargie, 2011): set goals easily; exhibit a high commitment to achieving the purpose of the group; are more productive; experience fewer attendance issues; have group members who are willing to stick with the group during times of difficulty; have satisfied group members who identify with, promote, and defend the group; have members who are willing to listen to each other and offer support and constructive criticism; and experience less anger and tension. Appropriate levels of group cohesion usually create a positive group climate, since group climate is affected by members' satisfaction with the group. Climate has also been described as group morale. The following are some qualities that contribute to a positive group climate and morale (Marston & Hecht, 1988): Participation. Group members feel better when they feel included in the discussion and a part of the functioning of the group. Messages. Confirming messages help build relational dimensions within a group, and clear, organized, and relevant messages help build task dimensions within a group. Feedback. Positive, constructive, and relevant feedback contribute to the group climate. Equity. Aside from individual participation, group members also like to feel as if participation is managed equally within the group and that appropriate turn-taking is used. Clear and accepted roles. Group members like to know how status and hierarchy operate within a group. Knowing the roles isn't enough to lead to satisfaction, though—members must also be comfortable with and accept those roles. Motivation. Member motivation is activated by perceived connection to and relevance of the group's goals or purpose. Group cohesion and climate are also demonstrated through symbolic convergence (Bormann, 1985). Have you ever been in a group that had 'inside jokes' that someone outside the group just would not understand? Symbolic convergence refers to the sense of community or group consciousness that develops in a group through non-task-related communication such as stories and jokes. The originator of symbolic convergence theory, Ernest Bormann, claims that the sharing of group fantasies creates symbolic convergence. Fantasy, in this sense, doesn't refer to fairy tales, sexual desire, or untrue things. In group communication, group fantasies are verbalized references to events outside the "here and now" of the group, including references to the group's past, predictions for the future, or other communication about people or events outside the group (Griffin, 2009). In any group, you can tell when symbolic convergence is occurring by observing how people share such fantasies and how group members react to them. If group members react positively and agree with or appreciate the teller's effort or other group members are triggered to tell their own related stories, then convergence is happening and cohesion and climate are being established. Over time, these fantasies build a shared vision of the group and what it means to be a member that creates a shared group consciousness. By reviewing and applying the concepts in this section, you can hopefully identify potential difficulties with group cohesion and work to enhance cohesion when needed to create more positive group climates and enhance your future group interactions. The Benefits of Team Diversity Rock and Grant (2016) assert that increasing workplace diversity is a good business decision. Hunt, Layton, and Prince (2015) conducted a study of 366 public companies and found that those in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity in management were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean, and those in the top quartile for gender diversity were 15% more likely to have returns above the industry mean. Similarly, Curtis, Schmid, and Struber (2012) found that organizations with at least one female board member yielded a higher return on equity and higher net income growth than those that did not have any women on the board (Figure 9.10). Figure 9.10 Teams made up of diverse members tend to perform better than teams of similar backgrounds. wocintech (Microsoft) – 134 – Women of Color in Tech Chat – CC BY 2.0. Additional research on diversity has shown that diverse teams are better at decision-making and problem-solving because they tend to focus more on facts (Rock & Grant, 2016). Phillips, Liljenquist, and Neale (2008) found that when working together, people from diverse backgrounds can potentially alter the group's behaviors, leading to more accurate and improved thinking. In their study, the diverse panels raised more facts related to the case than homogeneous panels and made fewer factual errors while discussing available evidence. Additionally, Levine, Apfelbaum, and Bernard (2014) showed that diverse teams are more likely to constantly reexamine facts and remain objective. They may also encourage greater scrutiny of each member's actions, keeping their joint cognitive resources sharp and vigilant. By breaking up workforce homogeneity, you can allow your employees to become more aware of their own potential biases—entrenched ways of thinking that can otherwise blind them to key information and even lead them to make errors in decision-making processes. In other words, when people are among homogeneous and like-minded (non-diverse) teammates, the team is susceptible to groupthink and may be reticent to think about opposing viewpoints since all team members are in alignment. In a more diverse team with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, the opposing viewpoints are more likely to come out and the team members feel obligated to research and address the questions that have been raised. Again, this enables a richer discussion and a more in-depth fact-finding and exploration of opposing ideas and viewpoints to solve problems. Diversity in teams also leads to greater innovation. Lorenzo, Yoigt, Schetelig, Zawadzki, Welpe, & Brosi (2017) sought to understand the relationship between diversity in managers (all management levels) and innovation. The key findings of this study show that: The positive relationship between management diversity and innovation is statistically significant—and thus companies with higher levels of diversity derive more revenue from new products and services. The innovation boost isn't limited to a single type of diversity. The presence of managers who are either female or are from other countries, industries, or companies can cause an increase in innovation. Management diversity seems to have a particularly positive effect on innovation at complex companies—those that have multiple product lines or that operate in multiple industry segments. To reach its potential, gender diversity needs to go beyond tokenism. In the study, innovation performance only increased significantly when the workforce included more than 20% women in management positions. Having a high percentage of female employees doesn't increase innovation if only a small number of women are managers. At companies with diverse management teams, openness to contributions from lower-level workers and an environment in which employees feel free to speak their minds are crucial for fostering innovation. When you consider the impact that diverse teams have on decision-making and problem-solving—through the discussion and incorporation of new perspectives, ideas, and data—it is no wonder that the BCG study shows greater innovation. Team leaders need to reflect upon these findings during the early stages of team selection so that they can reap the benefits of having diverse voices and backgrounds. Challenges and Best Practices of Working in Multicultural Teams As globalization has increased over the last decades, workplaces have felt the impact of working within multicultural teams. The earlier section on team diversity outlined some of the benefits of working on diverse teams, and a multicultural group certainly qualifies as diverse. However, some key practices are recommended to those who are leading multicultural teams to navigate the challenges that these teams may experience. People may assume that communication is the key factor that can derail multicultural teams, as participants may have different languages and communication styles. However, Brett, Behfar, and Kern (2006) outline four key cultural differences that can cause destructive conflicts in teams. The first difference is direct versus indirect communication, also known as high-context vs low-context orientation. Some cultures are very direct and explicit in their communication, while others are more indirect and ask questions rather than pointing out problems. This difference can cause conflict because, at the extreme, the direct style may be considered offensive by some, while the indirect style may be perceived as unproductive and passive-aggressive in team interactions. The second difference that multicultural teams may face is trouble with accents and fluency. When team members don't speak the same language, there may be one language that dominates the group interaction—and those who don't speak it may feel left out. The speakers of the primary language may feel that those members don't contribute as much or are less competent. The next challenge is when there are differing attitudes toward hierarchy. Some cultures are very respectful of the hierarchy and will treat team members based on that hierarchy. Other cultures are more egalitarian and don't observe hierarchical differences to the same degree. This may lead to clashes if some people feel that they are being disrespected and not treated according to their status. The final difference that may challenge multicultural teams is conflicting decision-making norms. Different cultures make decisions differently, and some will apply a great deal of analysis and preparation beforehand. Those cultures that make decisions more quickly (and need just enough information to make a decision) may be frustrated with the slow response and relatively longer thought process. These cultural differences are good examples of how everyday team activities (decision-making, communication, interaction among team members) may become points of contention for a multicultural team if there isn't an adequate understanding of everyone's culture. The authors propose that there are several potential interventions to try if these conflicts arise. One simple intervention is adaptation, which is working with or around differences. This is best used when team members are willing to acknowledge the cultural differences and learn how to work with them. The next intervention technique is structural intervention, or reorganizing to reduce friction on the team. This technique is best used if there are unproductive subgroups or cliques within the team that need to be moved around. Managerial intervention is the technique of making decisions by management and without team involvement. This technique should be used sparingly, as it essentially shows that the team needs guidance and can't move forward without management getting involved. Finally, exit is an intervention of last resort and is the voluntary or involuntary removal of a team member. If the differences and challenges have proven to be so great that an individual on the team can no longer work with the team productively, then it may be necessary to remove the team member in question. Conflict Within Teams Conflict occurs wherever people interact, both at home and at work. If employees don't get along with one another or their employers, there's very little motivation to do good work. Learning how to identify and navigate conflict is an important life skill that will prove to be extremely helpful, especially in the workplace. Professionally managing conflict will help to foster healthy working environments and create strong working relationships amongst coworkers and managers alike. Any time individuals interact, there is potential for conflict. Conflict occurs when differing interests and ideas collide, creating tension. Conflict is a natural part of everyday life, especially in the workplace. With compensation, deadlines, clients, etc. on the line, it is normal for the workplace to add additional stress and pressure to the challenges of everyday life. Therefore, it is more likely people will encounter conflict at work. Common Types of Team Conflict Conflict is a common occurrence on teams. Conflict itself can be defined as antagonistic interactions in which one party tries to block the actions or decisions of another party. Bringing conflicts out into the open where they can be resolved is an important part of the team leader's or manager's job. There are two basic types of team conflict: substantive (sometimes called task) and emotional (or relationship). Substantive conflicts arise over things such as goals, tasks, and the allocation of resources. When deciding how to track a project, for example, a software engineer may want to use a certain software program for its user interface and customization capabilities. The project manager may want to use a different program because it produces more detailed reports. Conflict will arise if neither party is willing to give way or compromise on his position. Emotional conflicts arise from things such as jealousy, insecurity, annoyance, envy, or personality conflicts. It is emotional conflict when two people always seem to find themselves holding opposing viewpoints and have a hard time hiding their personal animosity. Different working styles are also a common cause of emotional conflicts. Julia needs peace and quiet to concentrate, but her office mate swears that playing music stimulates his creativity. Both end up being frustrated if they can't reach a workable resolution. Common Causes of Conflict Some common causes of negative conflict in teams are identified as follows: Conflict often arises when team members focus on personal (emotional) issues rather than work (substantive) issues. Enrico is attending night school to get his degree, but he comes to work late and spends time doing research instead of focusing on the job. The other team members have to pick up his slack. They can confront Enrico and demand his full participation, they can ignore him while tensions continue to grow, or they can complain to the manager. All the options will lower team performance. Competition over resources, such as information, money, supplies or access to technology, can also cause conflict. Maria is supposed to have use of the laboratory in the afternoons, but Jason regularly overstays his allotted time, and Maria's work suffers. Maria might try to "get even" by denying Jason something he needs, such as information, or by complaining to other team members. Communication breakdowns cause conflict—and misunderstandings are exacerbated in virtual teams and teams with cross-cultural members. The project manager should be precise in his expectations from all team members and be easily accessible. When members work independently, it is critical that they understand how their contributions affect the big picture in order to stay motivated. Carl couldn't understand why Latisha was angry with him when he was late with his reports—he didn't report to her. He didn't realize that she needed his data to complete her assignments. She eventually quit, and the team lost a good worker. Team morale can be low because of external work conditions such as rumors of downsizing or fears that the competition is beating them to market. A manager needs to understand what external conditions are influencing team performance. Teams go through five definitive stages during development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. The success of work teams relies on individuals filling different positive roles, however work teams can fail if too many individuals take on negative roles. Group climate refers to the relatively enduring tone and quality of group interaction that is experienced similarly by group members The benefits of team diversity include better decision-making and problem-solving and opposing viewpoints are more likely to come out. There are two basic types of team conflict: substantive (sometimes called task) and emotional (or relationship). Recall a previous or current small group to which you belonged/belong. Trace the group's development using the five stages discussed in this section. Did you experience all the stages? In what order? Did you stay in some stages more than others? Discuss a team you were a part of that included a member who took on one of the positive team roles or one of the negative team roles in the team. What actions did they engage in? How did their actions impact the team's ability to work? Describe a substantive conflict and an emotional conflict you've experienced or witness at your place of work. How were these conflicts resolved? Remix/Revisions featured in this section Attributions CC Licensed Content, Original Modification, adaptation, and original content. Provided by: Stevy Scarbrough. License: CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 CC Licensed Content Shared Previously Conflict Management Authored by: Laura Westmaas. Published by: Open Library Located at: License: CC BY 4.0 CC Licensed Content Shared Previously Principles of Management Authored by: John Bruton, Lynn Bruton. 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Lorenzo, R., Yoigt, N., Schetelig, K., Zawadzki, A., Welpe, I., & Brosi, P. (2017, April 26). The mix that matters: Innovation through diversity. Retrieved November 19, 2022 from Marston, P. J., & Hecht, M. L. (1988). Group satisfaction. In R. Cathcart & L. Samovar (Eds.), Small group communication (5th ed.). Brown. Phillips, K. W., Liljenquist, K. A., & Neale, M. A. (2008). Is the pain worth the gain? The advantages and liabilities of agreeing with socially distinct newcomers. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35(3), 336-350. Rock, D., & Grant, H. (2016, November 4). Why diverse teams are smarter. Harvard Business Review. Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63(6), 384–399. Conflict will occur almost inevitably in groups and teams – and between individuals who do not necessarily work together in a group or team. Conflict can arise through:Misunderstandings between individuals; these often arise by accident.Differences in beliefs and values; these may be personal beliefs or values, or may arise from structural divisions in the organisation, for example, production and marketing.Differences of interest and ambition; such differences can result in competition for power, status and resources.Interpersonal differences: people have different personalities and temperaments.Feeling and emotions: people may have strong feelings and emotions but disguise them in work settings by talking about 'the principle of the matter.' Conflict itself can arouse emotion, leading to further conflict.Not all conflict is destructive, however. Some conflicts are best discussed openly: managed constructively, such discussions can lead to deeper understanding and better decisions. The problem is that conflict tends to be seen in terms of win–lose – that is, one argument will win and the other will lose. But it is possible to reach an outcome in which elements of both arguments are accepted – a win–win situation. Negotiations over pay are a simple example: employers may agree to pay employees more in exchange for changes in working practices. For win–win outcomes, however, there need to be mechanisms for open discussion and fair decision-making. The likelihood of resolving conflict depends on the behaviour of those involved. To understand this better, it can be helpful to classify people's responses to interpersonal conflict in five categories (Figure 4). These categories reflect the balance between cooperation (attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns) and assertiveness (attempts to satisfy your own concerns).(Source: based on Ruble and Thomas, 1976, and Whetten and Cameron, 1984)Figure 4 A two-dimensional model of conflict behaviourForcing represents the wish to satisfy one's own needs at the expense of others' needs. It may involve the use of formal authority, physical threats, majority rule, or disregarding the claims of the other person. This form of conflict management usually results in hostility and resentment and is an extreme example of a win–lose strategy. Nevertheless, sometimes it is necessary – in matters of health and safety, for example, or at times of crisis.In contrast, accommodating satisfies the needs of the other person at the expense of one's own needs, often to maintain friendly relations. It may work when the quality of the relationship is more important than other considerations. However, it can lead to difficulties: discipline is seen to be negligible, decision-making becomes difficult and you lose respect and self-esteem – a win–lose situation.Avoiding potential conflict is a common response to confrontation, particularly if a manager lacks self-confidence. It is the classic lose–lose situation, creating frustration and tension because issues are never resolved. Its use is normally justified only when an issue is unimportant or when time is limited.Compromising seeks to obtain partial satisfaction for both parties. It is the preferred strategy of many managers since it avoids some of the adverse consequences of other behaviours. It is particularly useful in complex situations and where there is time for negotiation and discussion.The only truly win–win strategy is collaborating, seeking to find solutions that are understood and appreciated by all parties. The focus is on the problem, not on personalities, blame or fault. It requires you to be both assertive and cooperative, and works when there is time to establish a collaborative environment. SHOW LESS JawapanPenjelasanThe question asks about the characteristics of a conflict-free work group. A lack of conflict often indicates a lack of engagement or initiative. A conflict-free work group is likely to be inactive because conflict can be a catalyst for discussion, problem-solving, and innovation. Without conflict, a group may become stagnant and unproductive. Here are further explanations. Option A: A busy work group might experience conflict due to competing priorities and deadlines. Option B: While dissatisfaction can lead to conflict, a conflict-free group isn't necessarily dissatisfied; it may simply be passive. Option D: A warlike work group is characterized by intense conflict and aggression, the opposite of a conflict-free environment. Understand the difference between informal and formal groups. Learn the stages of group development. Identify examples of the punctuated equilibrium model. Learn how group cohesion, social loafing, and collective efficacy can affect groups. Because many tasks in today's world have become so complex, groups and teams have become an essential component of an organization's success. The success of the group depends on the successful management of its members and making sure all aspects of work are fair for each member. Being able to work in a group is a key skill for managers and employees alike. What is a group? A group is a collection of individuals who interact with each other such that one person's actions have an impact on the others. In organizations, most work is done within groups, and managing groups is key to each of the P-O-L-C functions. How groups function has important implications for organizational productivity. Groups where people get along, feel the desire to contribute, and are capable of coordinating their efforts may have high performance levels, whereas those characterized by extreme levels of conflict or hostility may demoralize members of the workforce. In organizations, groups can be classified into two basic types: informal and formal. Informal work groups are made up of two or more individuals who are associated with one another in ways not prescribed by the formal organization. For example, a few people in the company who get together to play tennis on the weekend would be considered an informal group. A formal work group is made up of managers, subordinates, or both with close associations among group members that influence the behavior of individuals in the group. We will discuss many different types of formal work groups later on in this chapter. American organizational psychologist Bruce Tuckman presented a robust model in 1965 that is still widely used today. On the basis of his observations of group behavior in a variety of settings, he proposed a four-stage map of group evolution, known as the Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing Model (Tuckman, 1965). Later he enhanced the model by adding a fifth and final stage, adjourning. The phases are illustrated in the Stages of the Group Development Model. Interestingly enough, just as an individual moves through developmental stages such as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, so does a group, although in a much shorter period of time. According to this theory, to facilitate a group successfully, the leader needs to move through various leadership styles over time. Generally, this is accomplished by first being more direct, eventually serving as a coach, and later, once the group is able to assume more power and responsibility for itself, shifting to delegator. While research has not confirmed that this is descriptive of how groups progress, knowing and following these steps can help groups be more effective. For example, groups that do not go through the storming phase early on will often return to this stage toward the end of the group process to address unresolved issues. Another example of the validity of the group development model involves groups that take the time to get to know each other socially in the forming stage. When this socialization occurs, groups tend to handle future challenges better because the individuals have an understanding of each other's needs. Figure 13.4 Stages of the Group Development Model In the Forming stage, the group comes together for the first time. The members may already know each other or they may be total strangers. In either case, there is a level of formality, some anxiety, and a degree of guardedness as group members are not sure what is going to happen next. "Will I be accepted? What will my role be? Who has the power here?" These are some of the questions participants think about during this stage of group formation. Because of the large amount of uncertainty, members tend to be polite, conflict avoidant, and observant. They are trying to figure out the "rules of the game" without being too vulnerable. At this point, they may also be quite excited and optimistic about the task, perhaps experiencing a level of pride at being chosen to join a particular group. Group members are trying to achieve several goals at this stage, although this may not necessarily be done consciously. First, they are trying to get to know one another. Often this can be accomplished by finding some common ground. Members also begin to explore group boundaries to determine what will be considered acceptable behavior. "Can I interrupt? Can I leave when I feel like it?" This trial phase may also involve testing the appointed leader or seeing whether a leader emerges from the group. At this point, group members are also discovering how the group will work in terms of what needs to be done and who will be responsible for each task. This stage is often characterized by abstract discussions about issues to be addressed by the group; those who like to get moving can become impatient with this part of the process. This phase is usually short in duration, perhaps a meeting or two. Once group members feel sufficiently safe and included, they tend to enter the Storming phase. Participants focus less on keeping their guard up as they shed social facades, becoming more authentic and more argumentative. Group members begin to explore their power and influence, and they often stake out their territory by differentiating themselves from the other group members rather than seeking common ground. Discussions can become heated as participants raise conflicting points of view and values, or disagree over how tasks should be done and who is assigned to them. It is not unusual for group members to become defensive, competitive, or jealous. They may take sides or begin to form cliques within the group. Questioning and resisting direction from the leader is also quite common. "Why should I have to do this? Who designed this project in the first place? What gives you the authority to tell me what to do?" Although little seems to get accomplished at this stage, it actually serves an important purpose: group members are becoming more authentic as they express their deeper thoughts and feelings. What they are really exploring is "Can I truly be me, have power, and be accepted?" During this chaotic stage, a great deal of creative energy that was previously buried is released and available for use, but it takes skill to move the group from Storming to Norming. In many cases, the group gets stuck in the Storming phase. Once group members discover that they can be authentic and that the group is capable of handling differences without dissolving, they are ready to enter the next stage, Norming. "We survived!" is the common sentiment as this stage. Group members often feel elated at this point, and they are much more committed to each other and the group's goal. Feeling energized by knowing they can handle the "tough stuff," group members are now ready to get to work. Finding themselves more cohesive and cooperative, participants find it easy to establish their own ground rules (or norms) and define their operating procedures and goals. The group tends to make big decisions, while subgroups or individuals handle the smaller decisions. It is hoped at this point the group members are more open and respectful toward each other and willing to ask one another for both help and feedback. They may even begin to form friendships and share more personal information. At this point, the leader should become more of a facilitator by stepping back and letting the group assume more responsibility for its goal. Since the group's energy is running high, this is an ideal time to host a social or team-building event. Galvanized by a sense of shared vision and a feeling of unity, the group is ready to go into high gear. Members are more interdependent, individuality and differences are respected, and group members feel themselves to be part of a greater entity. At the Performing stage, participants are not only getting the work done, but they also pay greater attention to how they are doing it. They ask such questions as, "Do our operating procedures best support productivity and quality assurance? Do we have suitable means for addressing differences that arise so we can preempt destructive conflicts? Are we relating to and communicating with each other in ways that enhance group dynamics and help us achieve our goals? How can I further develop as a person to become more effective?" By now, the group has matured, becoming more competent, autonomous, and insightful. Group leaders can finally move into coaching roles and help members grow in skill and leadership. These leadership shifts are essential for managers enacting the Leadership function to keep in mind. In fact, a manager who leads multiple teams may find it necessary to shift leadership styles not only over time but between teams at different stages. Just as groups form, so do they end. For example, many groups or teams formed in a business context are project-oriented and therefore are temporary. Alternatively, a working group may dissolve because of an organizational restructuring. As with graduating from school or leaving home for the first time, these endings can be bittersweet, with group members feeling a combination of victory, grief, and insecurity about what is coming next. For those who like routine and bond closely with fellow group members, this transition can be particularly challenging. Group leaders and members alike should be sensitive to handling these endings respectfully and compassionately. An ideal way to close a group is to set aside time to debrief ("How did it all go? What did we learn?"), acknowledge one another, and celebrate a job well done. As you may have noted, the five-stage model we have just reviewed is a linear process. According to the model, a group progresses to the Performing stage, at which point it finds itself in an ongoing, smooth-sailing situation until the group dissolves. In reality, subsequent researchers, most notably Joy H. Karriker, have found that the life of a group is much more dynamic and cyclical in nature (Karriker, 2005). For example, a group may operate in the Performing stage for several months. Then, because of a disruption, such as a competing emerging technology that changes the rules of the game or the introduction of a new CEO, the group may move back into the Storming phase before returning to Performing. Ideally, any regression in the linear group progression will ultimately result in a higher level of functioning. Proponents of this cyclical model draw from behavioral scientist Connie Gersick's study of punctuated equilibrium (Gersick, 1991). The concept of punctuated equilibrium was first proposed in 1972 by paleontologists Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould, who both believed that evolution occurred in rapid, radical spurts rather than gradually over time. Identifying numerous examples of this pattern in social behavior, Gersick found that the concept applied to organizational change. She proposed that groups remain fairly static, maintaining a certain equilibrium for long periods. Change during these periods is incremental, largely due to the resistance to change that arises when systems take root and processes become institutionalized. In this model, revolutionary change occurs in brief, punctuated bursts, generally catalyzed by a crisis or a problem that breaks through the systemic inertia and shakes up the deep organizational structures in place. At this point, the organization or group has the opportunity to learn and create new structures that are better aligned with current realities. Whether the group does this is not guaranteed. In sum, in Gersick's model, groups can repeatedly cycle through the Storming and Performing stages, with revolutionary change taking place during short transitional windows. For organizations and groups who understand that disruption, conflict, and chaos are inevitable in the life of a social system, these disruptions represent opportunities for innovation and creativity. Figure 13.5 The Punctuated Equilibrium Model Cohesion can be thought of as a kind of social glue. It refers to the degree of camaraderie within the group. Cohesive groups are those in which members are attached to each other and act as one unit. The more cohesive a group, the more productive it will be and the more rewarding the experience will be for the group's members (Beal, et. al., 2003; Evans & Dion, 1991). Cohesive groups tend to have the following characteristics: they have a collective identity; they experience a moral bond and a desire to remain part of the group; they share a sense of purpose, working together on a meaningful task or cause; and they establish a structured pattern of communication. The fundamental factors affecting group cohesion include the following: Similarity. The more similar group members are in terms of age, sex, education, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs, the more likely the group will bond. Stability. The longer a group stays together, the more cohesive it becomes. Size. Smaller groups tend to have higher levels of cohesion. Support. When group members receive coaching and are encouraged to support their fellow team members, group identity strengthens. Satisfaction. Cohesion is correlated with how pleased group members are with one another's performance, behavior, and conformity to group norms. As you might imagine, there are many benefits in creating a cohesive group. Members are generally more personally satisfied and feel greater self-confidence and self-esteem in a group where they feel they belong. For many, membership in such a group can be a buffer against stress, which can improve mental and physical well-being. Because members are invested in the group and its work, they are more likely to regularly attend and actively participate in the group, taking more responsibility for the group's functioning. In addition, members can draw on the strength of the group to persevere through challenging situations that might otherwise be too hard to tackle alone. Despite the advantages of cohesion, too much cohesion can be detrimental to a group. Because members can come to value belonging over all else, an internal pressure to conform may arise where some members modify their behavior to adhere to group norms. Members may become conflict avoidant, focusing on trying to please one another so as not to be ostracized. In some cases, members might censor themselves to maintain the party line. As such, the group is dominated by a superficial sense of harmony and discourages diversity of thought. Having less tolerance for deviants, who threaten the group's static identity, cohesive groups will often disapprove of members who dare to disagree. Members attempting to make a change may be criticized, undermined, or even ostracized by other members, who perceive their attempts as a threat to the status quo. The painful possibility of being marginalized can keep many members in line with the majority. The more strongly members identify with the group, the easier it is to see outsiders as inferior or, in extreme cases, as enemies. It is easy to see how this can lead to increased insularity. This form of prejudice can have a downward spiral effect. The group is not getting corrective feedback from within its own confines, and it is closing itself off from input and a cross-fertilization of ideas from the outside. In such an environment, groups can easily adopt extreme ideas that will not be challenged. Denial increases as problems are ignored and failures are blamed on external factors. With limited, often biased, information and no internal or external opposition, groups like these can make disastrous decisions. Groupthink is a group pressure phenomenon that increases the risk of the group making flawed decisions by allowing reductions in mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment. A famous example of groupthink is the decision to invade Cuba made by President John F. Kennedy and his cabinet in 1961. In a matter of days, Cuban forces repelled the invaders, whose objective was to overthrow the entire Cuban government, resulting in many casualties and captured troops. In retrospect, there were many reasons why the Bay of Pigs invasion was doomed from the start, but the planning and approval were characterized by a belief that the insiders knew best and did not need to consider "devil's advocate" points of view. As this example illustrates, groupthink is a serious risk in highly cohesive groups (Janis, 1972). Cohesive groups can go awry in much milder ways. For example, group members can value their social interactions so much that they have fun together but spend little time on accomplishing their assigned task. Or a group's goal may begin to diverge from the larger organization's goal and those trying to uphold the organization's goal may be criticized (for example, students may tease the class "brain" for doing well in school). In addition, research shows that cohesion leads to acceptance of group norms (Goodman, et. al., 1987). Groups with high task commitment tend to do well, but suppose you belong to a group in which the norms are to work as little as possible! As you might imagine, these groups accomplish little and can actually work together against the organization's goals. Figure 13.6 Groups with high cohesion and high task commitment tend to be the most effective. Social loafing refers to the tendency of individuals to put in less effort when working in a group context. This phenomenon, also known as the Ringelmann effect, was first noted by French agricultural engineer Max Ringelmann in 1913. In one study, he had people pull on a rope individually and in groups. He found that as the number of people pulling increased, the group's total pulling force was less than the sum of individual efforts had been when measured alone (Karau & Williams, 1993). Why do people work less hard when they are working with other people? Observations show that as the size of the group grows, this effect becomes larger as well (Karau & Williams, 1993). The social loafing tendency is not so much a matter of laziness as a matter of perceiving that one will receive neither one's fair share of rewards if the group is successful nor blame if the group fails. Rationales for this behavior include, "My own effort will have little effect on the outcome." "Others aren't pulling their weight, so why should I?" Or "I don't have much to contribute, and no one will notice anyway." This is a consistent effect across a great number of group tasks and countries (Gabrenya, et. al., 1983; Harkins & Petty, 1982; Taylor & Faust, 1952; Ziller, 1957). Research also shows that perceptions of fairness are related to less social loafing (Price, et. al., 2006). Therefore, teams that are deemed as more fair should also see less social loafing. Collective efficacy refers to a group's perception of its ability to successfully perform well (Bandura, 1997). A group with high collective efficacy is one whose members share a belief in the group's capability to pursue its agreed-upon course of action and attain its goals. Collective efficacy is influenced by a number of factors, including watching others ("that group did it and we're better than them"), verbal persuasion ("we can do this"), and how a person feels ("this