Lecture 20, Mar 1, 2023

Impact of Group Structure

- Size
  - In a larger group, there is less satisfaction with group membership
    * More difficult to identify with the success and accomplishments of the group
    * Fewer chances to work on and develop friendships
    * Inhibitions to participation
  - Type of task and definition of performance impact relationship between group size and performance
    * *Additive* tasks are tasks where the group performance is dependent on the sum of performance of individuals (e.g. tug of war)
      - More people means more performance
    * *Disjunctive* tasks are tasks where the group performance is dependent on the best group member (e.g. research team, surgery)
      - More people means more performance
    * *Conjunctive* tasks are tasks where the performance is limited by the worst group member (e.g. relay race, assembly line)
      - More people means less performance
- Diversity
  - Diversity increases difficulty of effective communication and cohesion, so they take longer to develop
  - After development they are just as effective
  - Sometimes performs better on tasks that require creativity
- Norms
  - Norms are expectations of behaviour created over time
  - Norms are often unconscious – we only become aware of them in special circumstances (e.g. entering new social situations, conflicting norms)
  - Examples:
    * Dress norms
    * Reward allocation norms (e.g. equity, equality, reciprocity, social responsibility)
    * Performance norms
- Roles
  - Roles are positions in a group that have expectations attached to them
  - "packages" of norms
  - Can be either assigned (formally prescribed by an organization) or emergent (naturally developed to meet the needs of the group)
  - *Role ambiguity* occurs when one's job or its goals are unclear
    * Leads to people sitting around and not doing anything at all
  - *Role conflict* occurs when one is faced with incompatible expectations
    * Can occur with incompatibilities within someone's roles or between roles of different people
    * Can be avoided by avoiding contradictory messages, conferring with other role senders, being sensitive to multiple demands and fitting the right person to the roles
  - Roles can have categories:
    * Task roles (e.g. initiating conversations, clarifying, etc)
      - Easy to take on; members can take on a lot of these roles
    * Maintenance roles help you carry out your tasks (e.g. encouraging, harmonizing, etc)
      - Oftentimes team members with maintenance roles can help with reducing hindering roles
    * Hindering roles
      - Role conflict and role ambiguity can lead to hindering roles
- Status of members
- Cohesiveness
  - The degree to which a group is especially attractive to its members – a sense of belonging
  - Groups are cohesive when members want to stay in the group and describe the group in favourable

terms
- Tend to be higher in shorter, more intensive experiences (e.g. a hackathon), or with groups of friends
  * Social aspects increase cohesiveness
- Cohesiveness leads to more participation in group activities, more conformity to group norms, more success, and less variation in productivity among members
- Important factors that effect cohesiveness:
  * Thread and competition: when there is a threat, we're more likely to work together
  * Success: doing well together makes us want it more
  * Member diversity: diversity increases the chance of having common experiences
  * Group size: smaller groups are easier to stay cohesive
  * Toughness of initiation: going through tough challenges together increases cohesion
- Cohesive groups tend to be more or less productive than less cohesive groups; they have more consistency in productivity, but are not necessarily always more productive
  * A cohesive group can collectively reject norms, or collectively accept norms
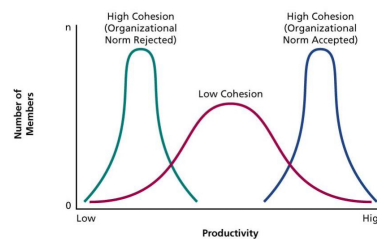

Figure 1: Effect of cohesion

- *Social loafing* is the attempt for group mates to put in less effort than what they are capable of
  - Free riding: people lower their effort to get a free ride at the expense of the other members
  - Sucker effect: people lower their effect because they feel others are free riding
  - Strategies to counteract social loafing:
    * Keep individual performance visible by making smaller groups
    * Make sure work is interesting, to use intrinsic motivation
    * Increase feelings of indispensability; make members feel unique
    * Increase performance feedback
    * Reward group performance

Factors Influencing Group Effectiveness

Figure 2: Factors influencing group effectiveness

- Cross-functional teams are groups that bring together people with different expertise
  - Communication is harder

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- – Members can learn from each other
- – Principles of effectiveness cross-functional teams:
  - * Composition: all relevant specialties are necessary and must be included
  - * Superordinate goals: attractive outcomes that can only be achieved by collaboration
  - * Physical proximity
  - * Autonomy
  - * Rules and procedures: basic decision rules must be laid down
  - * Leadership
- Safety nets in groups allow us to better take risks
- High-performing teams prioritize both the goals of the group and the goals of the individuals

Virtual Teams

- Key characteristics: lack of face-to-face contact, high physical/geographical dispersion
- Often cross-functional
- Advantages:
  - – Around-the-clock work
  - – Reduced travel time and cost
  - – Larger talent pool
    - * Access to better levels of expertise because people hired don't need to be physically close
    - * Having people spread out geographically can also mean some members are closer to physical locations
- Challenges:
  - – Trust: difficult to develop between virtual team members due to lack of physical contact/socialization
  - – Miscommunication: more prevalent due to lack of face-to-face communication
  - – High costs: with acquiring, setting up and setting up the required tech
  - – Isolation: causal interaction between teammates is not possible
  - – Management issues: managers have issue dealing with subordinates who are no longer in view
- To establish norms, we need to develop trust and effect patterns of communication
  - – Clear roles need to be established
  - – Code of conduct to make sure people don't vanish