

# Module 3: Group Dynamics and Team Building

Comprehensive University-Level Study Notes • Units 11 – 13

## 11 Group Formation and Development - Stages of Group Development - Group Norms and Roles

### Understanding Group Dynamics

A group is defined as two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who have come together to achieve particular objectives. Groups can be formal (designated by an organization's structure with specific task assignments) or informal (alliances that form naturally in response to the need for social contact).

### Stages of Group Development (Tuckman's Five-Stage Model)

Bruce Tuckman's framework explains how a group evolves from a collection of strangers into a highly integrated operating unit. Progress through these stages is sequential, though groups can regress under structural changes or stress:

- 1. Forming Stage:** Characterized by a high degree of uncertainty regarding the group's purpose, structure, and leadership. Members test the waters to determine what behaviors are acceptable. This stage concludes when members begin to think of themselves as part of a group.
- 2. Storming Stage:** A phase of intragroup conflict. Members accept the existence of the group but resist the constraints it imposes on individuality. Clashes arise over who will control the group and direct tasks. A clear hierarchy of leadership typically emerges by the end of this stage.

**3. Norming Stage:** Close relationships develop and the group demonstrates strong cohesiveness. A collective sense of group identity and camaraderie is established. This stage is complete when the group structure solidifies and members assimilate a common set of expectations.

**4. Performing Stage:** The group structure becomes fully functional and accepted. Group energy shifts from getting to know and understand each other to executing the task at hand. For permanent work groups, this is the final stage of development.

**5. Adjourning Stage:** For temporary committees, teams, and task forces, this wrapping-up phase prepares the group for disbandment. Attention shifts from high task performance to wrapping up activities, wrapping up loose ends, and managing the emotional impacts of separation.

## Group Norms

Group Norms are acceptable standards of behavior within a group that are shared by its members. Norms exert an unwritten but powerful influence on employee behavior, dictating what is right or wrong in specific situations.

- **Performance Norms:** Explicit cues regarding how hard members should work, how to get the job done, level of output, and appropriate levels of tardiness. This is the most dominant class of norms in corporate audits.
- **Appearance Norms:** Unspoken dress codes, grooming standards, and loyalty cues regarding when to look busy vs. when to relax.
- **Social Arrangement Norms:** Focuses on internal group interactions, casual friendships, and lunch seating arrangements.
- **Allocation of Resources Norms:** Governs assignments of difficult jobs, distribution of raw materials, equipment upgrades, and allocation of bonuses.

The pressure to conform to group norms was famously validated by Solomon Asch's conformity experiments, proving that individuals will deliberately alter their objective answers to match the consensus of a group, highlighting the power of peer pressure.

## Group Roles

A role is a set of expected behavior patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit. Understanding roles requires tracking specific structural facets:

- **Role Perception:** An individual's view of how they are supposed to act in a given situation, built out of observed historical behaviors around them.
- **Role Expectations:** How others believe an individual should act in a given context. In corporate settings, this forms a *Psychological Contract*—an unwritten agreement detailing mutual expectations between management and employees.
- **Role Conflict:** Arises when an individual finds that compliance with one role requirement makes it difficult to comply with another (e.g., a manager auditing a close personal friend's performance file).

## | 12 Team Building and Effectiveness - Characteristics of High-Performing Teams - Team Building Strategies – Conflict Resolution & Collaboration Techniques – Types of Conflict in Teams – Conflict resolution Strategies in Teams

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### Teams vs. Groups: The Strategic Distinction

While a work group interacts primarily to share information and make decisions to help each member perform within their area of responsibility, a **work team** generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. The individual efforts result in a level of performance greater than the sum of those individual inputs.

### Characteristics of High-Performing Teams

According to comprehensive organizational research, highly effective teams exhibit clear, reproducible traits:

- **Clear and Compelling Goals:** Members share a unified vision of the desired objective, driving collective internal commitment.
- **Relevant Complementary Skills:** Members possess both specialized technical expertise and strong interpersonal abilities to execute complex tasks.

- **Mutual Trust and Unified Commitment:** High psychological safety allows members to show vulnerability, admit errors, and support one another.
- **Exemplary Internal Communication:** Information flows freely across the matrix layout, allowing for rapid field feedback and adaptations.

## Team Building Strategies

Team building is a deliberate process designed to improve the operational and social capacity of a working group. Key intervention paths include:

1. **Goal-Setting Interventions:** Collaboratively clarifying the team's mission and defining individual milestone accountability measures.
2. **Role Clarification:** Systematically mapping individual tasks and lines of dependency to reduce role ambiguity and eliminate redundant work loops.
3. **Interpersonal Relationship Development:** Building social trust and communication habits via structured bonding, feedback audits, and active listening modules.

## Conflict Dynamics in Teams

Conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about.

### Types of Conflict in Teams:

- **Task Conflict:** Disagreements over the content and goals of the work itself. Low-to-moderate levels of task conflict can be functional, stimulating discussion and preventing groupthink.
- **Relationship (Interpersonal) Conflict:** Friction built around personal incompatibilities, animosity, and structural tension between people. This type of conflict is almost universally dysfunctional, draining emotional energy and hurting performance.
- **Process Conflict:** Friction regarding the mechanics of task execution—specifically how the work gets done and who assumes resource accountability.

## Conflict Resolution Strategies (The Thomas-Kilmann Mode Instrument)

Managers map conflict responses along two primary dimensions: cooperativeness (the degree to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns) and assertiveness (the degree to which

the individual attempts to satisfy their own concerns). This yields five distinct conflict-handling strategies:

Strategy Mode	Assertiveness / Cooperativeness Profile	Strategic Operational Context
<b>Competing</b>	High Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness	A win-lose approach. Used when quick, decisive action is vital (e.g., emergencies, safety violations) or on vital corporate issues where unpopular actions must be enforced.
<b>Collaborating</b>	High Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness	A win-win approach. Both parties integrate their perspectives to find a comprehensive solution that resolves all concerns. Deployed when the issues are too important to compromise on.
<b>Compromising</b>	Mid Assertiveness, Mid Cooperativeness	An intermediate path where both parties give up something to meet in the middle. Used when goals are moderately important or to reach temporary settlements under tight deadlines.
<b>Avoiding</b>	Low Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness	Unassertive and uncooperative. The individual withdraws from or suppresses the conflict. Used when an issue is trivial, when emotions are too high, or when others can resolve it more effectively.
<b>Accommodating</b>	Low Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness	Placing the opponent's interests above one's own to maintain harmony. Deployed when you realize you are wrong, when the issue matters more to the other party, or to build social capital.

## Collaboration and Joint Problem-Solving Techniques

To move a team from friction to collaboration, organizations use targeted communication techniques:

- **Establishing Superordinate Goals:** Creating a compelling, shared meta-goal that cannot be achieved by any single individual or faction independently, forcing separate units to collaborate.

- **Structured Active Listening Loops:** Requiring each conflicting party to paraphrase and accurately state the opponent's core perspective to their satisfaction before launching a counter-argument.

## | 13 Leadership Theories & Leadership Styles

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### Theoretical Perspectives in Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a defined vision or set of organizational goals. The study of leadership has evolved through a sequence of primary theoretical frameworks:

#### I. Behavioral Leadership Theory

Behavioral theories argue that specific behaviors differentiate leaders from non-leaders, suggesting that leadership can be taught and developed. Key foundational frameworks include:

- **The Ohio State & Michigan Studies:** Isolated two primary structural dimensions of leader behavior:
  - *Initiating Structure (Production-Oriented):* The degree to which a leader defines and structures their role and those of subordinates to achieve goals.
  - *Consideration (Employee-Oriented):* The degree to which a leader establishes job relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect for ideas, and regard for feelings.
- **The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid:** Plots a leader's behavioral style across a 9x9 grid mapping *Concern for Production* (X-axis) against *Concern for People* (Y-axis). The **Team Management style (9,9)**—which maximizes both focus areas simultaneously—is positioned as the most universally effective leadership profile.

#### II. Contingency Theory (Fiedler's Model)

Fred Fiedler's contingency model asserts that effective group performance depends on matching a leader's style with the degree to which the situation gives control and influence to the leader. Fiedler used the **\*\*Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) questionnaire\*\*** to determine if a leader is fundamentally task-oriented (low LPC score) or relationship-oriented (high LPC score). He stated that a leader's style is fixed and isolated three situational components:

1. **Leader-Member Relations:** The degree of confidence, trust, and respect members have in their leader.

2. **Task Structure:** The degree to which job assignments are proceduralized and structured.
3. **Position Power:** The degree of formal influence a leader holds over variables like hiring, discipline, and salary increases.

*Conclusion:* Task-oriented leaders perform best in situations that are either highly favorable or highly unfavorable, while relationship-oriented leaders excel in moderately favorable situations.

### III. Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional leaders guide or motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirements. It is built upon an economic exchange loop:

- **Contingent Reward:** The leader contracts exchanges of rewards for effort, promising rewards for good performance and logging achievements.
- **Management by Exception (Active):** The leader monitors employee activities closely, identifies deviations from rules and standards, and takes corrective action immediately.
- **Management by Exception (Passive):** The leader intervenes only if established performance standards are not met.

### IV. Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization. This style is built upon **The Four Is (The Pillars of Transformation):**

- **Idealized Influence:** Provides a vision and sense of mission, instilling deep pride, respect, and trust across the enterprise.
- **Inspirational Motivation:** Communicates high expectations clearly, uses symbols to focus efforts, and expresses important purposes simply.
- **Intellectual Stimulation:** Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem-solving, encouraging followers to challenge long-held assumptions.
- **Individualized Consideration:** Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, and mentors staff to maximize potential.

## Comprehensive Analysis of Leadership Styles

A leadership style is the recurring pattern of behavior that a leader exhibits when influencing subordinates. We evaluate eight primary variations:

1. **Autocratic Leadership:** Centralizes all decision-making authority in the leader. Dictates tasks directly, limits employee input, and relies on formal position power. Highly effective in fast-paced crises but hurts long-term morale and team innovation.
2. **Democratic Leadership:** Encourages employee participation in decision-making, delegates authority, and uses feedback as a coaching tool. Builds strong long-term engagement, though consensus-building can slow operational agility.
3. **Laissez-Faire Leadership:** A hands-off approach where the leader gives complete autonomy to the group, allowing members to make decisions and set deadlines. Highly effective with self-motivated experts but can cause role confusion in less-experienced teams.
4. **Participative Leadership:** A style that blends elements of democratic leadership, actively consulting with staff and integrating team feedback before finalizing strategic choices.
5. **Coaching Leadership:** Focuses on developing people for the future. Identifies individual strengths and weaknesses, builds long-term development goals, and provides continuous feedback.
6. **Affiliative Leadership:** A people-first style that prioritizes emotional harmony and team cohesion. Excellent for healing rifts in a team or motivating staff during high-stress crises, but can result in mediocre performance metrics if constructive feedback is avoided.
7. **Transformational Leadership Style:** Uses inspirational charisma, visionary goals, and intellectual motivation to drive significant organizational change.
8. **Situational Leadership (Hersey-Blanchard Model):** Asserts that a leader must adjust their style based on the **Readiness (Maturity)** of their followers—defined as the ability and willingness to complete a task. It maps leadership into four progressive quadrants:
  - *Directing (Telling):* Low readiness; followers are unable and unwilling. Require high task focus and low relationship focus.
  - *Coaching (Selling):* Medium readiness; unable but willing. Requires high task and high relationship focus.
  - *Supporting (Participating):* Medium readiness; able but unwilling. Requires low task and high relationship focus.
  - *Delegating:* High readiness; able and willing. Requires low task and low relationship focus.

End of Module 3 • Subject: Organizational Behaviour