

# Team Composition

Case duration (Min):

**45-60**

Organizational Behaviour (OB)

**Groups and teams**

**Worldwide**

## Case summary:

Students should recognise that teams can often achieve tasks the individual could not do alone. Teams may accomplish their tasks more or less efficiently dependent upon a number of factors including their structure/ composition.

Discussion about the size and composition of successful teams

A video clip is used, more as a mini lecture to stimulate discussion, and explore team compilation problems

## Learning objectives:

To introduce the concept of team structure and composition and its affect upon team effectiveness and efficiency

## Case problem:

What is the difference between a group and a team? What makes an effective and efficient team (composition)?

<http://www.learnhighergroupwork.com/>

First, if you are taking a taught management course then consult with your tutor and ensure that the case has not been scheduled into a teaching class or tutorial. If it has not:

1. Play/ read the media associated with the case. You may need to access the Internet and enter a URL to locate any video clips.

2. Attempt the Case study questions.

Consider attempting the case study as a group exercise; you could form a study group with fellow students.

3. Check the suggested answers - remember these are suggestions only and there are often many possible answers.

Discuss questions and answers with other students.

4. If you feel your answer(s) were weak then consider reading the relevant suggested readings again (also see the case study suggested references).

## Title/ Media type

## URL/ Media description

Team Composition

<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=1582>

### Film

Kathy Eisenhardt, co-director of Stanford Technology Ventures Program and professor in Management Science and Engineering, discusses the size and composition of successful teams. She recommends a team of 3-5 cross-functional people with diverse age group and experience

Team Size and Product Development

<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=721>

### Film

Console teams can be upwards of 100 people. GameBoy games can be built with 10-15 people.

This core group of people is divided into engineering, art, animation, game design, and production. The product cycle was optimized to get the best product out as quickly as possible by condensing the concept cycle, focusing on a target, and rapidly incorporating feedback, she says.

Being Small Inside of Big (Examples of workplace teams)

<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=2161>

### Film

There are many types of team such as the founding team (entrepreneurs), the management team, the project or problem-oriented team etc Some teams need to be larger than others; some teams are formed within small organizations - others from within larger organizations. In some cases teams may be formed from across several organizations. This film clip considers the creation of teams within larger global companies.

An on-hand help desk, administrative assistance, and valuable access into global resources are just a few examples of the benefits of working for a global enterprise. But Teresa Briggs, Partner at Deloitte Silicon Valley, has found that the corporate structure of managing small, regional teams within a large organization, with its own growth metrics and goals, allows for more nimble innovation and a greater overall return.

## NOTES:

## Case study questions...

Action	Pre/During/After class
<b>1</b> <b>WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE (IF ANY) BETWEEN A "GROUP" AND A "TEAM"?</b> What is the difference (if any) between a "group" and a "team"?	During
<b>2</b> <b>TEAM STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION</b> Identify the main factors, evident in the video clip, that make for a 'great' (effective and efficient) team	During
<b>3</b> <b>TEAM STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION (2)</b> Identify other factors, NOT present in the video clip, that you believe could also make for a 'great' (effective and efficient) team. In each case, explain why you believe the factor is important.	During
<b>4</b> <b>TEAM SIZE</b> Critically discuss the optimum size for a team/ group	During
<b>5</b> <b>EXAMPLES OF WORKPLACE TEAMS</b> List and discuss examples of workplace teams, evaluating the importance of the various composition factors previously identified  What benefits might a small team gain from operating within a larger organization?	During
<b>6</b> <b>TEAMS CAN BE FORMULATED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.</b> Identify and discuss the various ways in which teams might be formed.	During

# Answers...

## GROUP

An association of two or more individuals who have a shared sense of identity and who interact with each other in structured ways on the basis of a common set of expectations about each other's behavior

## TEAM

a psychological group whose members share a common goal which they pursue collaboratively. Members can only succeed or fail as a whole, and all share the benefits and costs of collective success or failure.

## SOCIAL LOAFING

The inclination for individuals to apply less effort when working as part of a group i.e. to let others do the work

## TEAMWORKING

Cooperation by a group of people towards a common purpose.

## EFFICIENCY

Doing things right

## Question/ Answer

### 1 What is the difference (if any) between a "group" and a "team"?

What is the difference (if any) between a "group" and a "team"?

Some people use the terms interchangeably. Others consider a team to be a group that perform very well together - a group is two or more individuals who have a shared sense of identity (common goal) and who interact with each other in structured ways; A group in itself does not necessarily constitute a team. Teams normally have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his or her strengths and minimize his or her weaknesses.

### 2 Team structure and composition

Identify the main factors, evident in the video clip, that make for a 'great' (effective and efficient) team

1. SIZE (number of members)
2. CROSS FUNCTIONAL (has the right specialists) Does the team feel it has the appropriate people participating?
3. DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP (Age) a variety of ages are represented
4. COHESION (contains members with prior experience of each other)

### 3 Team structure and composition (2)

Identify other factors, NOT present in the video clip, that you believe could also make for a 'great' (effective and efficient) team. In each case, explain why you believe the factor is important.

Many answers are possible - they may include:

Clear objectives • Good decision making processes • Clear roles, responsibilities and leadership • Trust, co-operation, support and constructive conflict • Good communication

### 4 Team size

Critically discuss the optimum size for a team/ group

Students should recognise that this will be governed by contextual factors such as the task and resources (including time) available.

A team that is too small has more work to do, may lack required skills but is easy to coordinate and control

A team that is too large finds communication, coordination and control difficult and may encounter social loafing

A further issue concerns decision making. Teams with odd numbers may reach decisions faster.

### 5 Examples of workplace teams

List and discuss examples of workplace teams, evaluating the importance of the various composition factors previously identified

What benefits might a small team gain from operating within a larger organization?

Many answers are possible - they may include:

Project team - A project team is a team whose members usually belong to different groups or functions and are assigned to activities for the same project. Most project teams require involvement from more than one department, therefore most project teams can be classified as cross functional.

Senior management team - The Senior Management Team is responsible for the leadership, strategy and priorities of the organisation, for the delivery of the Business Plan and Budget, and for the overall day to day running of the Organisation

Customer Services team - a customer-focused team. Customer service is most evident in sales and after-sales service, but should infuse all the processes in the value chain. Good customer service is the result of adopting customer focus.

New product launch team - The Product Launch Process must address all the steps necessary to start volume production, plan and execute marketing activities, develop needed documentation, train sales and support personnel (internal and external), fill channels, and prepare to install and support the product.

In some cases teams are a long term feature of the organization and in other cases they may be formed to deal with a specific challenge, after which they disband and adjourn

## 6 Teams can be formulated in a variety of ways.

Identify and discuss the various ways in which teams might be formed.

**Teams can be formulated in a variety of ways. The most common method is at the discretion of a senior member of the organisation. Normally, a more senior manager or one of the team members themselves will select the team. In other cases it might simply be a case of using whomever is available.**

**Students should discuss issues of motivation and the distribution of the appropriate skills, roles etc**

## Case study references

Cole, G A. and Kelly, P P. (2011) 'Management Theory and Practice', Ed. 7. Cengage EMEA.

Kelly, P P. (2009) 'Group Work and Multicultural Management Education Programmes', Journal of Teaching in International Business, 20(1)

Tuckman, B W. (1965) 'DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE IN SMALL GROUPS', Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 6, 3, p. 384 - 399.

Tuckman, B W. and Jensen, A. (1977) 'Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited', Group and Organization Studies, 2 (4), p. 419 - 427.