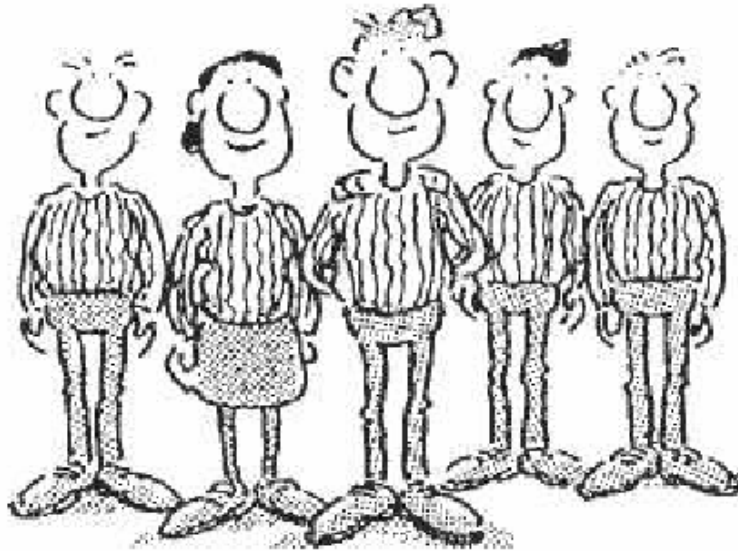


WORKING WITH TEAMS



INTRODUCTION

1. Groups are formed mainly for two reasons, the first is to make administration of individuals easier and the second is to get complex tasks done more effectively. The group is made up of individuals who have Individual Needs which in turn require Team Needs once they are formed. Different people bring different needs to a group and this sometimes makes it difficult for the group to work effectively. The way a group works together is called "Group Dynamics".

2. For a group to get things done it is important for it to work well together. This means each of the individuals should have different strengths and weaknesses to support the various activities the group has to perform. This Section describes the different roles people can use when working in a team and the ideal composition of a team.

GROUP DYNAMICS

3. A team which is brought together for the first time will naturally not perform as well as a similar group that have been working together for some time. In the ATC this is most noticeable when mixed flights from all Squadrons are formed at Summer Camp. It will still happen for groups formed to do a task at the Squadron but the affects will not be as noticeable or last as long because the individuals will already know each other and share common experiences.

4. All team members go through certain emotional and team pressures when a group is brought together for the first time. The group will go through five fairly predictable stages as follows:

- Forming.
- Storming.
- Norming.
- Performing.
- Mourning.

5. The time it takes to go through the above phases will depend on many factors such as:

- The size of the team.
- The common background and experiences shared by the team members.
- The ability of the team Leader to pull the team together.
- The reason why the team has been formed.
- The motivation and willingness of the team to perform and succeed.

6. **Forming.** When a team is forming its members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. They are assessing what they can get away with in front of the other team members and also testing the leader's ability both formally and informally. This is, therefore, a key phase for leaders to firmly exert their authority, encourage the team and set standards. In this phase so much is going on within the team that the team will accomplish very little. During the forming stage it is natural for the team members to have the following feeling and behaviours.

- Excitement, anticipation and optimism.
- Pride in being selected for the team or task.
- An initial tentative attachment to the team.
- Suspicion about the organisation or activities.

7. **Storming.** Storming is probably the most difficult stage the team will go through. The team starts to worry about the lack of achievement and begins to get frustrated, accusational and over-excited. Individuals think they alone can succeed and resist the need to work as a team. During this stage the leader must be consistent, get to know the individuals and relieve any internal conflicts. It is important that standards are maintained, that a good example is set and that the Individual Needs are identified. The following feelings and behaviours may occur during this stage.

- Concern and uncertainty about how other team members are doing things.
- Sharp changes in attitude to the team and its progress and achievements.
- Arguing amongst team members.
- Defensiveness and the formation of sub-groups or cliques.
- Questioning the selection of the other team members.
- Perceived favoritism, tensions and jealousy within the team.

8. **Norming.** This stage is used to sort out competing loyalties and responsibilities. The members begin to accept the team ground rules. Emotional conflicts reduce as relationships become less competitive and more co-operative. Suddenly the group begins to realise they can only succeed if they work together and things then start to be achieved. The leader at this stage can give encouragement and address the Individual Needs of status, praise and training as appropriate. The feelings and behaviour that may appear at this stage are:

- An ability to criticise constructively.
- An accepted membership of the team.
- Relief that things are working out.
- An attempt to avoid internal conflict.
- A sharing of individual problems.

9. **Performing.** By now the team has settled its internal relationships and knows where it stands. They can start to achieve results through knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses and getting the best from the team. At this stage the team just gets on with the task and supports each other as necessary. The leader can now address the Task and Team Maintenance Needs. The type of feelings and behaviour that may exist at this stage are:

- A better understanding of each other's abilities and feelings.
- Satisfaction at working well together.
- An awareness of one's own abilities and a willingness to improve.
- An ability to sort out internal team problems. -
- A strong attachment to the team.

10. **Mourning.** No group or team lasts forever, if the task is completed or Summer camp ends the team must be disbanded. The group will want to keep the team in place because so much has been achieved together. This is only natural but the leader's job is to recognize when the team is no longer needed and to provide a ritual ending. It is important for the leader to give constructive feedback to individuals about their performance and contribution to the team activities. This softens the blow by acknowledging the Individuals Needs. The type of feelings in this stage are:

- A sadness that good times have to come to an end.
- The pledges of long term friendship.
- A promise to get together in some way again.

HOW GROUP DYNAMICS AFFECT THE LEADER

11. All groups go through these stages of team growth. How long it takes to get to the "Performing" stage will depend on the leader, the team members and the situation. Once a leader is aware of the stages of team growth it is relatively easy to determine which stage a group is going through. The leader should give the appropriate support to the team in each stage

12. A group of cadets forming a mixed flight at Summer Camp will be a harder leadership challenge than a group of cadets back at the Squadron. Have a look at the section on Leadership Style and decide which leadership styles a leader would go through as the team goes from "Forming" through to "Performing"

TEAM CONSTITUTION

13. For a team to work effectively its members must have a good cross-section of skills and knowledge. This means that everyone is capable of bringing something different to the team. For tasks which require hands-on leadership it is generally accepted that a team of seven or eight is the largest size practical for one leader to handle.

14. Research has shown that there are nine different roles that people use when working in teams. People's characters will naturally drive them to working in one or two of these roles. This doesn't mean they cannot perform the other roles, it just means that they have to work harder and given the opportunity they would fall back into the roles they are happier with. The nine roles are described below:

- **Leader** The leader co-ordinates the group in achieving its task by using the resources effectively. The leader performs all the functions described so far in this section
- **Shaper.** The shaper gets frustrated if things aren't going in the right direction. Shapers can be intolerant of indecisiveness and waffle. They generally have a lot of drive and self-confidence but can be too task orientated, forgetting the social roles.
- **Innovator.** The innovator is an ideas person who looks for new solutions and can be very intelligent and imaginative. Their imagination sometimes makes them wander off the subject and they can need some control to keep them focussed. They can lose interest with some long tasks. They may have problems in communicating their ideas to the rest of the team.
- **Evaluator,** The evaluator takes nothing for granted, they naturally evaluate what they are told and what is happening. They are good at reasoning and critical thinking and act as the groups conscience stopping them making stupid mistakes. They can appear over critical to the rest of the team and sometimes a bit boring because they are always so practical.
- **Expert.** The expert is the source of all knowledge, they differ from the Innovator in that they deal with facts and knowledge and not ideas. The experts superior knowledge can make them unapproachable and they are prone to shoot down the Innovator's ideas on principle.

- **Resource Investigator.** The Resource Investigator can't do everything themselves but always knows someone who can. They make a point of making contacts and knowing how to get things done in the system. They are naturally extrovert, inquisitive and able to see the possibilities of a given situation. They can sometimes appear over-enthusiastic and a bit wearing to some of the team members.
- **Team Worker.** The Team Worker likes to keep the team together in total harmony. They are good communicators and supporters of ideas, generally building team spirit. A good listener, very popular and flexible team member. They can appear indecisive because they dislike conflict and competition and don't wish to offend anyone by making a wrong decision.
- **Worker.** The Worker takes the team's ideas and turns them into practical solutions. They are happy to watch the group but do not always contribute to the task until given something specific to do. They work systematically and efficiently to ensure tasks are carried out. They have high self-control and self-discipline with realism and common sense. They can be inflexible to changes in the plan and may not accept new ideas.
- **Completer.** The Completer is driven to meeting deadlines and standards. They show a permanent sense of urgency and can appear to worry a lot. They constantly assess progress and monitor the detail of the tasks for mistakes. They can appear impatient and intolerant of others who seem to waste time.

THE IDEAL TEAM

15 The ideal team constitution will depend on the task being performed by the team. As a minimum the team should contain a leader, a thinker (Innovator or Evaluator) and a doer- (Worker). A straightforward and repetitive task would only need a Leader, Workers and Completers. A task that involves some problem solving would need Innovators to come up with the ideas and Evaluators to keep their ideas practical. A large team for a complex task would require a Team Worker to help keep everyone happy and a Resource Investigator to help make things happen.

16. When a leader gets to know the members of their team they will, having gained some experience, be able to determine who fits which of the team roles. This will allow them to manage the team more effectively by using people's natural styles.

17. One challenge for the leader is that their natural style may not be that of a leader and they will have to work more at performing that role. As a leader you must understand the strengths and weaknesses of each member of your group and not become frustrated or annoyed with the way they are.

18. When groups are formed the leader must be aware of the growth stages of the team and match their leadership style to the needs of the team.

19. All people are different and bring a variety of abilities to a team. An NCO should be capable of recognising these abilities and using them effectively to achieve the team's objectives.